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Wednesday, 19 December 2001, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Reports of the Third Committee

The President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Third Committee on agenda items 108 to 116, 118, 119, 12 and 27. I request the Rapporteur of the Third Committee, Mr. Juraj Priputen of Slovakia, to introduce the reports of the Third Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Priputen (Slovakia), Rapporteur of the Third Committee: I have the great honour to present for consideration the following reports of the Third Committee on the agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly.

Under item 27 of the agenda, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 7 of document A/56/585, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under item 108 of the agenda, entitled "Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 24 of document A/56/572, the adoption of five draft resolutions.

Under item 109 of the agenda, entitled "Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 17 of document A/56/573, the adoption of two draft resolutions, and, in paragraph 18, the adoption of two draft decisions.

Under item 110 of the agenda, entitled "Crime prevention and criminal justice", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 21 of document A/56/574, the adoption of five draft resolutions.

I should like to draw the attention of the Assembly to a correction in the English version of draft resolution III, entitled "Combating the criminal misuse of information technologies". The fifth preambular paragraph should be identical to the text contained in document A/C.3/56/L.15/Rev.1, as follows:

> "Noting that reliance on information technologies, while it may vary from State to State, has resulted in a substantial increase in global cooperation and coordination, with the result that the criminal misuse of information technologies may have a grave impact on all States".

Under agenda item 111, "International drug control", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 8 of document A/56/575, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 112, "Advancement of women", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 36 of document A/56/576, the adoption of eight draft resolutions. I should like to draw the attention of the Assembly to a correction to draft resolution III, entitled "Improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system". In the second

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line of the ninth preambular paragraph, the words "in regard to" should be replaced by the words "in the category of". The beginning of the paragraph should read as follows:

> "Welcoming the progress made in maintaining and improving the representation of women at some levels of the Secretariat, particularly in the category of geographical appointments".

Under agenda item 113, "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century', the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 10 of document A/56/577, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 114, "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 18 of document A/56/578, the adoption of five draft resolutions and, in paragraph 19, one draft decision.

Under agenda item 115, "Promotion and protection of the rights of children", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 16 of document A/56/579, the adoption of two draft resolutions.

Under agenda item 116, "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 7 of document A/56/580, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 118, "Right of peoples to self-determination", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 17 of document A/56/582, the adoption of three draft resolutions.

Under agenda item 119, "Human rights questions", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 4 of document A/56/583, the adoption of one draft decision.

Under sub-item (a) of agenda item 119, "Implementation of human rights instruments", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 24 of document A/56/583/Add.1, the adoption of four draft resolutions.

Under sub-item (b) of agenda item 119, "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 109 of document A/56/583/Add.2, the adoption of 25 draft resolutions.

Under sub-item (c) of agenda item 119, "Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 48 of document A/56/583/Add.3, the adoption of seven draft resolutions.

Under sub-item (d) of agenda item 119, "Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action", the Third Committee indicates in its report contained in document A/56/583/Add.4 that no draft proposals were submitted or action taken under this sub-item.

Under sub-item (e) of agenda item 119, "Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights", the Third Committee indicates in its report contained in document A/56/583/Add.5 that no draft proposals were submitted or action taken under this sub-item.

Under agenda item 12, "Report of the Economic and Social Council", the Third Committee recommends, in paragraph 12 of document A/56/584, the adoption of three draft decisions. In connection with draft decision I contained in this report, I should like to inform the Assembly that the Third Committee is recommending that it be authorized to hold meetings in 2002, during the resumed fifty-sixth session, in order to consider agenda item 117, entitled "Elimination of racism and racial discrimination".

I would like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to our Chairman, Ambassador Fuad Mubarak Al-Hinai of Oman, for the outstanding manner in which conducted the work of our Committee. I should also like to thank my dear colleagues on the Bureau of the Committee — Vice-Chairpersons Ms. Carina Mårtensson of Sweden, Mr. Yehia Oda of Egypt and Mr. Carlos Enrique García González of El Salvador — with whom I had the pleasure to work.

I should also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Secretariat staff who helped us in our work, especially Ms. Kate Starr Newell, the Secretary of the Committee, and her competent and experienced team, in particular Ms. Vivian Pliner-

Josephs and Mr. Otto Gustafik, as well as their colleagues. I also wish to thank them for the assistance they gave me in carrying out my duties as Rapporteur of the Third Committee.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the members of the Group of Eastern European States, whom I had the honour to represent on the Bureau of the Third Committee during this session of the General Assembly.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Third Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Third Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations too that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Third Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Third Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance. That means that, where a recorded vote or a separate vote was taken, we will do the same. I would also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Third Committee.

Agenda item 108 (*continued*)

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/572)

The President: The Assembly has before it five draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 24 of its report.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the five draft resolutions one by one. After all the decisions have been taken, representatives will again have the opportunity to explain their votes or positions.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/113).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Cooperatives in social development".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/114).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: towards a society for all in the twenty-first century".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/115).

The President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 56/116).

The President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Policies and programmes involving youth".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution V without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 56/117).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 108?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 109

Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/573)

The President: The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 17 of its report and two draft decisions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 18 of the same report.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution II will be postponed to a later date to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on draft resolution II as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budget implications is available.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution I, entitled "United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/118).

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft decisions recommended by the Third Committee for adoption.

Draft decision I is entitled "Arrangements regarding participation of non-governmental organizations in the Second World Assembly on Ageing".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft decision I?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The President: Draft decision II is entitled "Provisional rules of procedure for the Second World Assembly on Ageing".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft decision II?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 109.

Agenda item 110

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/574)

The President: The Assembly has before it five draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 21 of its report.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the five draft resolutions.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Role, function, periodicity and duration of the United Nations congresses on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/119).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Action against transnational organized crime: assistance to States in capacity-building with a view to facilitating the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/120).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Combating the criminal misuse of information technologies".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution III, as orally corrected by the Rapporteur?

Draft resolution III, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 56/121).

The President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 56/122).

The President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution V without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 56/123).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 110.

Agenda item 111

International drug control

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/575)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 8 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "International cooperation against the world drug problem".

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/124).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 112

Advancement of women

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/576)

The President: The Assembly has before it eight draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 36 of its report.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution VII will be postponed to a later date to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on draft resolution VII as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budget implications is available.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions I to VI and VIII.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/125).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Situation of older women in society".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/126).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution III, as orally corrected by the Rapporteur?

Draft resolution III, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 56/127).

The President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 56/128).

The President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution V without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 56/129).

The President: Draft resolution VI is entitled "United Nations Development Fund for Women".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution VI without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution VI was adopted (resolution 56/130).

The President: As announced earlier, action on draft resolution VII will be taken at a later date.

Draft resolution VIII is entitled "Violence against women migrant workers".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution VIII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution VIII was adopted (resolution 56/131).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 112.

Agenda item 113

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/577)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

The draft resolution is entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly".

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/132).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 114

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/578)

The President: The Assembly has before it five draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 18 of its report, and one draft decision recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 19 of the same report.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the five draft resolutions and the draft decision.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Enlargement or the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/133).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/134).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/135).

The President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 56/136).

The President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution V without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 56/137).

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 19 of its report.

The draft decision is entitled "Audit of the operations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Albania".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 114?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 115

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/579)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 16 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "The rights of the child".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/138).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "The girl child".

A separate, recorded vote has been requested on operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution II.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia,

Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

India

Operative paragraph 1 was retained by 162 votes to 1, with 1 abstention.

The President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II, as a whole, without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II, as a whole, was adopted (resolution 56/139).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 115?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 116

Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/580)

The President: The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/140).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 118

Right of peoples to self-determination

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/582)

The President: The Assembly has before it three draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 17 of its report.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution I will be postponed to a later date to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on draft resolution I as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budget implications is available.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions II and III.

We turn first to draft resolution II, entitled "Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/141).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, United States of America

Abstaining:

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Draft resolution III was adopted by 161 votes to 3, with 1 abstention (resolution 56/142).

The President: I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Alaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): We have just now adopted draft resolution III, entitled "The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination". In that regard, I would like to explain my delegation's vote.

My delegation would like to express its reservations on those parts of the resolution that may be construed as recognition of Israel.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda item 119

Human rights questions

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/583)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 4 of its report. The draft decision is entitled "Documents considered by the General Assembly in connection with the question of human rights".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 119.

(a) Implementation of human rights instruments

Report of the Third Committee
(A/56/583/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the four draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 24 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/143).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "International Covenants on Human Rights". The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/144).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families". The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/145).

The President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Equitable geographical distribution of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia

Abstaining:

Argentina, Brazil, Gambia, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Draft resolution IV was adopted by 113 votes to 47, with 5 abstentions (resolution 56/146).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 119?

It was so decided.

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Report of the Third Committee
(A/56/583/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly has before it 25 draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 109 of its report.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution XXIV will be postponed to a later date, to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on draft resolution XXIV as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budged implications is available.

The Assembly will take a decision on draft resolutions I through XXIII and XXV one by one. After all the decisions have been taken, representatives will again have the opportunity to explain their votes or positions.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Human rights education". The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/147).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Human rights and unilateral coercive measures."

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia

Abstaining:

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan

Draft resolution II was adopted by 114 votes to 51, with 2 abstentions (resolution 56/148).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/149).

The President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "The right to development".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Denmark, Israel, Japan, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia

Draft resolution IV was adopted by 123 votes to 4, with 44 abstentions (resolution 56/150).

The President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia,

Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia

Abstaining:

Argentina, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, South Africa

Draft resolution V was adopted by 109 votes to 53, with 6 abstentions (resolution 56/151).

The President: Draft resolution VI is entitled "Respect for the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations to achieve international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms and in solving international problems of a humanitarian character".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia

Abstaining:

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Uruguay

Draft resolution VI was adopted by 100 votes to 54, with 15 abstentions (resolution 56/152).

The President: Draft resolution VII is entitled "Strengthening United Nations action in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution VII without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution VII was adopted (resolution 56/153).

The President: Draft resolution VIII is entitled "Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in electoral processes as an important element for the promotion and protection of human rights".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, Samoa, Tuvalu, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yugoslavia

Draft resolution VIII was adopted by 99 votes to 10, with 59 abstentions (resolution 56/154).

The President: Draft resolution IX is entitled "The right to food".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the

former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Australia, New Zealand

Draft resolution IX was adopted by 169 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions (resolution 56/155).

The President: Draft resolution X is entitled "Human rights and cultural diversity".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution X without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution X was adopted (resolution 56/156).

The President: Draft resolution XI is entitled "Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XI without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution XI was adopted (resolution 56/157).

The President: Draft resolution XII is entitled "National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution XII was adopted (resolution 56/158).

The President: Draft resolution XIII is entitled "Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Brunei Darussalam, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Myanmar, Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam

Draft resolution XIII was adopted by 162 votes to none, with 8 abstentions (resolution 56/159).

The President: Draft resolution XIV is entitled "Human rights and terrorism".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Draft resolution XIV was adopted by 102 votes to none, with 69 abstentions (resolution 56/160).

The President: Draft resolution XV is entitled "Human rights in the administration of justice".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution XV was adopted (resolution 56/161).

The President: Draft resolution XVI is entitled "Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XVI without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution XVI was adopted (resolution 56/162).

The President: Draft resolution XVII is entitled "Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XVII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution XVII was adopted (resolution 56/163).

The President: Draft resolution XVIII is entitled "Protection and assistance to internally displaced persons".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XVIII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution XVIII was adopted (resolution 56/164).

The President: Draft resolution XIX is entitled "Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia

Abstaining:

Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Guatemala, Micronesia (Federated States of), Peru, Republic of Korea, Singapore, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Draft resolution XIX was adopted by 116 votes to 46, with 9 abstentions (resolution 56/165).

The President: Draft resolution XX is entitled "Human rights and mass exoduses".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XX without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution XX was adopted (resolution 56/166).

The President: Draft resolution XXI is entitled "United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XXI without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution XXI was adopted (resolution 56/167).

The President: Draft resolution XXII is entitled "Comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XXII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution XXII was adopted (resolution 56/168).

The President: Draft resolution XXIII is entitled "Situation of human rights in Cambodia".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XXIII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution XXIII was adopted (resolution 56/169).

The President: As announced earlier, action on draft resolution XXIV will be taken at a later stage.

I give the floor to the representative of Mexico, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mrs. Monroy (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico would like to make a statement in its capacity as one of the chief sponsors of this draft resolution on the protection of migrants in order to rectify some errors that we have noted in the Rapporteur's presentation as well as in the English-Spanish-language versions of this document. There are also some errors in the Spanish version.

The delegation of Mexico would like to state for the record that the following errors appear in the English-language version — the working language — of draft resolution XXV, entitled "Protection of migrants".

In the last preambular paragraph, after the date shown, the words "Advisory Opinion" should be capitalized.

In operative paragraph 6, the word "States" should be followed by the word "parties".

Finally, in the third line of operative paragraph 9, before the words "Declaration and Programme of Action", there should appear the word "Durban", and the words from "adopted" right on through "intolerance" should be deleted.

Those are all the corrections for the English-language version.

The delegation of Mexico would ask the Secretariat through you, Sir, to make the necessary relevant corrections in all other official languages, inasmuch as these represent important sections of the draft resolution on which, during the course of negotiations, some effort was required to achieve consensus; hence, the importance of these corrections. To make the Secretariat's work easier, the delegation of Mexico will ensure that the relevant wording is forwarded.

The President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XXV without a vote. May I suggest that the General Assembly also adopt draft resolution XXV, as orally corrected by the representative of Mexico, without a vote?

Draft resolution XXV, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 56/170).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 119.

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Report of the Third Committee
(A/56/583/Add.3)

The President: The Assembly has before it seven draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 48 of its report.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution III is postponed to a later date to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on draft resolution III as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budget implications is available.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mrs. Baldeh (Gambia): On 13 November, at a meeting of the Third Committee during the discussion on agenda item 119, entitled "Human rights questions", Mr. Stéphane De Loecker, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), made certain allegations regarding some arrests that took place shortly after the Gambia's presidential elections, which were held this past October. Unfortunately, I was unable to exercise my right of reply at that meeting, as I had to perform other duties.

The allegations were exaggerated and made in bad faith because the EU representation in the Gambia was among the first foreign missions to be briefed on the events concerned. In fact, on 12 November, we circulated to all missions in New York a press release issued by the competent Gambian authorities to clarify the matter.

The EU should refrain from delivering lectures to others and accord commendation when it is due. No society is perfect. As for Belgium, we are all aware that the Patrice Lumumba case is not the only skeleton in its closet, if I may be permitted the pun. My country, however, has not been shouting allegations from the

rooftops about human rights violations. Those in glass houses should therefore not throw stones.

As for the EU, it ought to have emphasized the positive aspects of the election period, such as the fact that the elections took place in a peaceful manner and were free, fair and transparent. That has since been confirmed by international observers, such as the Commonwealth Observer Group and our Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. James Victor Gbeho, whom he had sent to the Gambia to observe the elections.

Mrs. Ahmed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to explain its vote on draft resolution VI contained in document A/56/583/Add.3, entitled "Human rights situation in Sudan".

My delegation, along with that of the European Union, tried to achieve consensus on this draft resolution. However, it has now become clear that some will insist on grossly politicizing this decision. The positive developments in my country have been ignored. One case in point with respect to the politicization of the draft resolution and to the loss of objectivity concerning developments in the Sudan was the statement made by the delegation of Canada before the Third Committee after the Committee's adoption of the draft resolution.

The draft resolution fails to support the ceasefire that has been repeatedly called for by my Government as a first step towards achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict. Furthermore, the draft resolution ignores our numerous efforts to stem the conflict. For all these reasons, my delegation will vote against the draft resolution and calls on all other delegations to do likewise.

Mr. Al-Ethary (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): The democratic attitude that emerged with the birth of the Republic of Yemen has been put into everyday practice in our country. That attitude requires us to adopt clearly defined positions vis-à-vis many political issues, particularly those designed to support and protect human rights on the national and international levels.

In this respect, we emphasize our full respect for relevant international instruments, in particular the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and for international humanitarian law in general. Our principled conviction is that human rights are integrated, indivisible and not subject to selectivity and that we must therefore deplore any human rights violations.

Politicizing human rights issues, using them as a tool to target specific States and peoples while ignoring others, and exploiting them FOR purely political purposes unrelated to noble human rights values: such selectivity and double standards are rejected by many cultures, civilizations and religions because they contradict the noble human values of justice and equity. Therefore, my delegation will not participate in the voting on any of the draft resolutions contained in document A/56/583/Add.3, on human rights situations.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions I, II and IV to VII one by one. After all the decisions have been taken, representatives will again have the opportunity to explain their votes or positions.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia

Against:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Chad, China, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam

Abstaining:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Zambia

Draft resolution I was adopted by 72 votes to 49, with 46 abstentions (resolution 56/171).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kuwait informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote against.]

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Situation of human rights in parts of South-Eastern Europe".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/172).

The President: As announced earlier, action on draft resolution III will be taken at a later date.

Draft resolution IV is entitled "Situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia

Against:

Iran (Islamic Republic of), Rwanda, Uganda

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Zambia

Draft resolution IV was adopted by 90 votes to 3, with 69 abstentions (resolution 56/173).

The President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Situation of human rights in Iraq".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yugoslavia

Against:

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sudan

Abstaining:

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, China, Congo, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Vénezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia

Draft resolution V was adopted by 100 votes to 2, with 63 abstentions (resolution 56/174).

The President: Draft resolution VI is entitled "Situation of human rights in the Sudan".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia

Against:

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam

Abstaining:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Vanuatu, Zambia

Draft resolution VI was adopted by 79 votes to 37, with 48 abstentions (resolution 56/175).

The President: Draft resolution VII is entitled "Question of human rights in Afghanistan".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution VII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution VII was adopted (resolution 56/176).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote.

Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire abstained from the vote on draft resolution I, concerning the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Côte d'Ivoire remains committed to the principle of respect for human rights, both on the national level and throughout the world. This year, our position has evolved in the light of the improvement of the human rights situation in certain spheres, as indicated in the report of the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, contained in document A/56/278, and as reflected in the resolution just adopted.

Our vote should be interpreted as encouragement to the Iranian authorities to pursue their efforts to promote respect for human rights. In that regard, we invite the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to authorize the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights to visit Iran to assess for himself the human rights situation in that country. This would have the advantage of improving the credibility of upcoming reports while allowing friends of Iran — among which Côte d'Ivoire is honoured to be included — to gain greater insight into the actual situation and into the various actions being taken on the ground.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 119.

(d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/583/Add.4)

The President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the report of the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 119?

It was so decided.

(e) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/583/Add.5)

The President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the report of the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 119?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 12 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/584)

The President: The Assembly will take a decision on the three draft decisions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 12 of its report.

We turn first to draft decision I, entitled "Resumption of the work of the Third Committee".

The Third Committee adopted draft decision I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision I?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The President: Draft decision II is entitled "Organization of work of the Third Committee and biennial programme of work of the Committee for 2002-2003".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision II?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The President: Draft decision III is entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision III?

Draft decision III was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of the chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council allocated to the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 27

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/585)

The President: The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/177).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 27?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to make it known to representatives that, as distributed, it is my intention to resume the tenth emergency special session on Thursday, 20 December 2001, at 3.p.m. The list of speakers is open now.

As a result, agenda item 20, "Multilingualism", and agenda item 40, "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", which are scheduled for Thursday, 20 December, at 3 p.m., will be taken up by the Assembly after the Second Committee reports on Friday, 21 December 2001.

The meeting rose at 11.35 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.89

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

89th plenary meeting
Thursday, 20 December 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 20 (continued) **and 43**

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(f) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/56/681 and A/56/687)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.62)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.62.

Mr. Schumacher (Germany): I have the honour to introduce this year's draft resolution on Afghanistan under agenda items 20 (f) and 43. I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution A/56/L.62, the following countries have become sponsors: the Central African Republic, Haiti, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Latvia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Rwanda, Seychelles, Suriname, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu and Venezuela, and a vast number of additional countries have followed.

Please allow me to underline at the outset that Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union that will later be presented by Belgium, which holds the current presidency of the European Union.

This is indeed a historic moment. Two days from now, the new interim authority comprising all Afghan groups will hopefully take office in Kabul. For the first time in more than a generation there is justified hope that peace will prevail and that Afghanistan will establish a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative Afghan Government, which will hopefully lead the country to a safe and prosperous future.

While the General Assembly is about to take action on draft resolution A/56/L.62, the Security Council is close to reaching agreement on the mandate of an international security force to operate in Kabul and surrounding areas.

The shock of 11 September has united the world in its efforts to combat terrorism. It has galvanized the Afghans to rid themselves of the oppressive Taliban regime, which had persistently rejected all offers from the General Assembly to engage in constructive dialogue. It is a regime which had stubbornly violated its obligation to surrender Osama bin Laden and which for too long had been providing a safe heaven for international terrorists. In the past few weeks, we have all witnessed a complete reversal of the political

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situation on the ground, the ousting of the cruel and inhumane Taliban regime, the destruction of the Al-Qaeda terrorist network in Afghanistan and the holding of the Bonn conference on the future of Afghanistan culminating in the formation of the interim authority. These are all signs that Afghanistan is finally moving in the right direction, a prospect which will be beneficial not only to the Afghans themselves but also to the entire region of South and Central Asia. This has been a joint effort of the international community and the people of Afghanistan. Operation Enduring Freedom, a courageous effort enjoying worldwide support, has become the symbol not only of the defeat of the terrorist Taliban regime, but also of the liberation of Afghanistan from oppression and terror. The worldwide support for Operation Enduring Freedom is another sign of international solidarity; the operation was the appropriate answer to the perpetrators of the horrific terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center in this very city.

The Afghan people have suffered immensely over the past 20 years, and 2001 has been an exceptionally difficult year. In the past 12 months, repression by the Taliban had reached new heights. We witnessed renewed fighting and massacres, large-scale violations of human rights, discrimination against women and ethnic minorities, harassment and displacement of innocent civilians, new refugee flows and the destruction of invaluable parts of the national cultural heritage. The national economy reached a point of near collapse, a disastrous situation further aggravated by the worst drought in living memory. And let us not forget, above all, that we are still facing a major humanitarian crisis.

We are all aware that it will take enormous effort and many years, perhaps decades, to rehabilitate the socio-economic structures of Afghanistan. The political landscape has irrevocably changed. The road map towards a political settlement is now in place, but economic recovery still has to follow. Political momentum and socio-economic recovery are intertwined and need each other. We can achieve lasting stabilization of the country only if we address both aspects at the same time. Therefore, the United Nations and the international community must remain committed to Afghanistan.

This year's draft resolution, which is contained in document A/56/L.62 and which I have the honour to present today, conveys exactly that message to the Afghan people. The draft resolution is a forward-looking document. It expresses the support of the international community for the Afghan people and for their political future. It addresses urgent humanitarian issues and paves the road towards socio-economic rehabilitation and reconstruction. But the text also clearly highlights the responsibilities and contributions of the Afghans in this joint effort.

This year's negotiations took place under very, very difficult circumstances. At the same time, we experienced an extraordinarily constructive spirit during discussion of the text. The strong interest in this draft resolution is reflected also in the overwhelming number of sponsors this year. Let me wholeheartedly thank all 110 sponsors — and in particular my colleague from Luxembourg as coordinator for humanitarian draft resolutions under agenda item 20 — for their support. It is a clear sign to the Afghan people that we all continue to care about them.

Let me quickly highlight some of the major aspects of the text. The draft resolution endorses the results of the Bonn conference, namely the agreement on the formation of an interim authority and on the steps to follow. We consider the Bonn agreement to provide a historic one-time opportunity for Afghanistan. However, unless the Afghan leadership remains fully committed to the agreement and implements all its provision a lasting peace cannot be obtained. The text further endorses the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan and urges the interim authorities in Kabul to cooperate closely with it. The return of Afghanistan to the international community and any lasting political solution require respect for human rights, in particular the full, equal and effective participation of women in the civil, cultural, economic, political and social life of the country. The draft resolution further strongly urges all Afghans to adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Long before the tragic events of 11 September, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs tried to raise our awareness that Afghanistan was heading for another large-scale humanitarian disaster. Much has changed for the better since. The international community made impressive efforts to support those in need in Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries, and the restrictions imposed by the Taliban on humanitarian operations have been removed. We are confident that a large-scale

humanitarian catastrophe can now be averted. I would in particular thank the Afghan staff of the United Nations who continued to provide assistance to vulnerable populations throughout the crisis under exceptionally difficult circumstances. More needs to be done. The draft resolution urges all States to continue to support humanitarian relief efforts financially and logistically. The interim authority is asked to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to all in need, irrespective of their gender and of their ethnic or religious background, and to ensure the safety and security of all humanitarian personnel.

Unlike the texts before the Assembly in previous years, this draft resolution for the first time goes beyond solely addressing humanitarian assistance. It calls for early rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts as an integral part of an overall political solution. This requires the close collaboration of all actors within the United Nations system and also other humanitarian organizations, the international community, Afghan authorities and Afghan civil society. The draft resolution stresses the leadership role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Lakhdar Brahimi, as overall coordinator for the development of a comprehensive strategy covering all aspects of humanitarian assistance, early recovery and reconstruction.

For many years, Germany has shown a special commitment to Afghanistan, bilaterally as well as within the United Nations. We traditionally introduce the General Assembly draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan. We also introduced resolution 55/243 a few months ago on the despicable act of destruction of the Buddha statues in Bamiyan earlier this year.

My country is still chairing the Afghan Support Group. We are also prepared to join an international force in sending troops to Afghanistan. Through the European Union's special envoy for Afghanistan, Mr. Klaus-Peter Klaiber, Germany and its European partners are engaging in sustainable reconstruction efforts. These efforts are made on the understanding that the international community must help the Afghan people find their way to a stable, peaceful and unified State.

Many interested States and groups have contributed, and are still contributing, to these goals. Their contributions are very welcome, but I would like to stress once again the pivotal role of the United Nations in this context. The United Nations is, and will remain, the legitimate body to help and support our Afghan friends in rebuilding their society, their economy and their country. So far, it has carried out its tasks admirably. I wish to thank the Secretary-General; his Special Envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi; the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan, Francesc Vendrell; and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Kenzo Oshima, and their teams, for their tireless efforts in this context. Germany will continue to consistently support United Nations efforts in this area with all the means at its disposal. We want to see a peaceful and free Afghanistan that will play its part in ensuring the region's long-term stability.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): I am pleased to see you, Sir, preside over a meeting on Afghanistan at this historic time. I am thankful to the Government of Germany for having hosted the Bonn meeting, which brought about so many changes in Afghanistan.

I should also like to thank Ambassador Kastrup and his colleagues, who worked on drafting parts A and B of the draft resolution that has been submitted. I am grateful also to Mr. Hanns Schumacher for his very thought-provoking and interesting introduction of the text. I shall not reiterate many of the points Mr. Schumacher touched on in his statement.

Security and stability must be restored in Afghanistan, through both short- and medium-term humanitarian efforts. Without conditions of security, food will not get to where it is most needed. It has already been announced that this winter will be a rather cold one in Afghanistan, and very soon the mountainous part of the country will be covered in snow. The snow in winter and the rain in March and April are very much needed in Afghanistan for irrigation. For more than three years, atmospheric precipitation was scarce in Afghanistan, and the Taliban regime failed to do anything about the very severe drought.

As a result of 23 years of armed conflict, roads and irrigation and power systems have been severely damaged. The Taliban closed all girls' schools and failed to establish an educational system for the boys. The Taliban's discrimination against women and their lack of interest in humanitarian affairs destroyed the health-care system. There are 7 million Afghan refugees, including internally displaced persons, many

of them in Pakistan and Iran. The onset of winter will greatly hinder their immediate repatriation. Indeed, in all cases of repatriation the climate has to be taken into consideration.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has expressed concern that one out of three children in Afghanistan — that is, 400,000 annually — will die before the age of 5. Furthermore, as the Assembly is aware, Afghanistan is the most heavily mined country in the world. Uexploded ordnance is also left over from past conflicts and from recent air attacks. Mine-clearance action is vital to Afghanistan and must be expanded. This is required for the safety of the population, especially the children; for the necessary revitalization of agriculture; for the repatriation of refugees; and especially now, for emergency food delivery.

The United Nations mine action programme had planned to spend $30 million to demine the country over a 12-year period. However, there is now a need for quicker action in clearing unexploded ordnance. The United Nations has appealed for $34 million for the next six months. These funds are needed immediately.

Here in the General Assembly, a resolution was adopted yesterday by consensus on the report of the Third Committee on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has estimated that United Nations agencies will need a total of $662 million to meet Afghanistan's vital needs through 31 March. So far, only $35 million have been committed by 15 donor countries and other donors are therefore solicited to contribute.

A basic effort of coordination is required. The United Nations is performing a major job in assisting the interim administration on the humanitarian and reconstruction fronts. These efforts will have implications for the projected United Nations budget, which is relatively very modest. Fortunately, significant bilateral aid is being planned by the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and many other donor countries. These States may agree on the appointment of a general coordinator who will cooperate with the Afghan authorities.

We hope that the Tokyo meeting in January 2002, with the participation of donor Governments and of organizations providing aid to Afghanistan, will prepare the ground for both the urgently needed humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and for setting priorities in the field of reconstruction and revitalization.

I should like to express all the appreciation of the Afghan authorities for the job performed in many stages by Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi with great efficiency and by Francisc Vendrell and their colleagues, who had to spend sleepless nights, especially at the Bonn meeting. That will always be appreciated always by the Afghans.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (spoke in French): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European associated with the Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as Iceland, associate themselves with this statement.

Because of recent events, Afghanistan continues to face three major challenges to which the European Union referred from this very rostrum last year: putting an end to the fighting that is destabilizing the country and the entire region; re-establishing respect for human rights, including equal rights for men and women; and seeking a political solution to the conflict.

The challenges remain, but the targeted military operations that began on 7 October, aimed at eliminating the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda, and their outcome on the ground have presented the Afghan people with an opportunity to break the deadlock. At this crucial hour for the future of that country and for regional stability, the international community is ready to help the Afghans to seize this opportunity.

The signing in Bonn on 5 December of the agreement on provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent Government institutions was an important first step in the right direction. Indeed, it represents a first phase towards the establishment of a broad-based, multiethnic and fully representative Government concerned with the equality of the sexes and with improving the lot of women. The Union fully supports these arrangements and calls on all Afghan groups to implement them in a comprehensive manner. In that context, it should be pointed out that any political settlement in Afghanistan must be based on the will of the Afghans.

The European Union also reiterates its firm support for the United Nations and, in particular, for the mission of Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi.

The European Council, which met in Laeken on 14 and 15 December, committed itself to participating in the international community's efforts to restore stability in Afghanistan on the basis of the outcome of the Bonn conference and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. In that regard, it urged the deployment of an international security force mandated with contributing to the security of Afghan and international administrations in Kabul and surrounding areas. The Security Council should also encourage Member States participating in that force to support the interim Afghan authority in the creation and training of new Afghan armed and security forces.

However, the positive developments in the political situation must not overshadow the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. It is alarming and may deteriorate further during the winter. Given the urgent needs of the Afghan people, humanitarian assistance is an absolute priority. The distribution of assistance, particularly to refugees and displaced persons, will have to adjust to changing circumstances and be undertaken in the most effective and coordinated way possible. It must not be left to chance. In that respect, the European Union remains concerned by the insecure conditions in which the representatives of humanitarian and non-governmental organizations are living in Afghanistan and stresses the importance of facilitating the distribution of humanitarian assistance.

The European Union supports the efforts of the United Nations specialized agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and all humanitarian agencies to find practical and flexible solutions. For its part, the European Union and its States members have already committed or are prepared to commit €352 for humanitarian assistance, €102 of which will be drawn from the community budget.

A post-conflict settlement remains an enormous challenge. More than 20 years of war and political instability have destroyed the structures of Afghan society, completely disrupted the functioning of institutions and public services and brought immense human suffering. The European Union will help the Afghan people and their new leaders to rebuild the country and to promote the speediest possible return of democracy. In order to bolster its efforts, the European Union has appointed Mr. Klaus-Peter Klaiber as its Special Representative for Afghanistan.

Particular attention must be paid to the establishment of institutions and mechanisms to protect human rights and to promote the situation of women in Afghanistan. The team of the European Union's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Klaiber, will include an official entrusted with ensuring the effective exercise of their rights by the women of Afghanistan and act as the Union's interlocutor for Afghan women.

Dynamic cooperation and international coordination will be necessary to rehabilitation and reconstruction. In that regard, the Afghanistan Support Group is playing an important role in closing the gaps between humanitarian assistance and the immediate needs and reconstruction of Afghanistan. This effort will need to be complemented by equally effective coordination on the ground. Finally, the most decisive element of all in the reconstruction effort will be the respect of all Afghan groups for their political commitments.

For his part, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will play a crucial role as coordinator in the development and implementation of a strategy that should make it possible to move smoothly from the phase of humanitarian assistance to that of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The European Union would like to emphasize the importance of launching now a plan of economic and institutional reconstruction for Afghanistan. It is essential that the political process be accompanied by economic aid. The fight against anti-personnel mines, the cultivation of drug-producing plants and drug trafficking are elements to take into account. The challenge is thus great and manifold.

At the initiative of the Presidency and the European Commission, the European Union is co-chairing, today and tomorrow in Brussels, the first meeting of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Steering Group. This meeting aims to develop concrete and lasting coordination arrangements with regard to the assessment of needs and the identification, implementation and follow-up to assistance measures. The meeting should also make it possible to fine-tune the mechanism for channelling financial assistance. Finally, it will provide support for political renewal in

Afghanistan and ensure better coordination of the donors' efforts with a view to preparing for the ministerial conference to be held in Tokyo in January 2002. At these meetings, the European Union pledges to help cover the needs that are identified, along with the United States, the Arab States and Japan.

The situation has changed enormously, and our energy, assistance and support are necessary today to support the Afghan people in determining their future of peace and stability. We believe that this effort is translated constructively into the draft resolution that is before us today. It reflects both the political and humanitarian aspects of the current situation.

I would like to conclude by warmly congratulating Germany on drawing up this excellent draft resolution. In addition to its practical perspectives, it contains a message of support that is indispensable for the Afghan population. The other members of the European Union have been eager to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation notes with appreciation the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan. We share his optimism that an acceptable settlement is within reach, provided the Afghan leaders navigate the difficult political terrain ahead in a constructive spirit and with a genuine willingness to compromise for the greater good of the people.

While terrorism triggered the current military intervention in Afghanistan, the international community must confront a wide array of challenges in the effort to restore long-term stability to the country. It is our fervent hope that Afghanistan will not be abandoned once the immediate military and security objectives of the American-led international coalition have been achieved. Learning from the lessons of the past, we should make every effort to ensure that Afghanistan will not be left as a failed State to be ruled by various warlords, providing a fertile breeding ground for the kind of terrorism that shook the world on 11 September.

Rebuilding the country will require a massive commitment of resources and long-term, sustained attention from the international community. In an unprecedented development, we now have an incoming interim Government that has the backing not only of the developed world but also of its neighbours, all of which have an enormous interest in Afghanistan's stability. As the interim Government takes office on 22 December, it will do so with a deep sense of the good will and political support of the international community as well as good prospects for massive international assistance for the reconstruction of the war-devastated country.

The recently concluded Bonn Agreement, reflecting a political consensus by Afghan parties, an unprecedented move, is a step in the right direction. Malaysia wholeheartedly welcomes this development and hopes that it will provide the necessary basis on which to build a strong and viable Government in Afghanistan. Much credit is due to Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi and his team for their untiring efforts and excellent negotiating skills in facilitating this landmark achievement in Afghan history. We also express our appreciation to all members of the international community that contributed to the Afghan political process, including the Government of Germany for its own efforts and for hosting the historic conference in Bonn that resulted in the breakthrough that we all laud.

We are at a defining moment in Afghanistan's history. At this critical juncture, what we members of the international community decide in the coming days and weeks with regard to Afghanistan will have far-reaching repercussions for that country. The United Nations Development Programme's warning against "quick fixes" and donor fatigue should, therefore, be taken to heart. A "Marshall Plan" for the country, to facilitate the establishment of special institutions and resources over a considerable period of time, must be considered as representing a serious effort to rehabilitate the war-ravaged country.

Malaysia looks forward to the rapid restoration of all of the institutions of Afghanistan and to its transformation, with international assistance, from a country devastated by long years of war to a modern, democratic Islamic country that enjoys all the attributes of a strong and viable nation-State, a proud and fully functioning member of the international community. We look forward to playing a constructive role in contributing to that process.

However, reconstruction must not be confined to the physical rehabilitation of a devastated infrastructure or to ensuring an economically viable State. The world must seize the opportunity to re-engineer the socio-economic foundations of

Afghanistan and to help its people break away from the tragic modes of behaviour and patterns of its unhappy past, of which the culture of "warlordism" was and continues to be a characteristic feature.

While the creation of a stable, broad-based representative Government remains the political end game, every effort must be made to address the grievances of ethnic groups that feel that they have been economically, politically and culturally sidelined. Pursuing ethnocentric policies serves only to promote the narrow interests of the warlords and tribal chieftains, making the tasks of nation-building all the more difficult. Reconciliation and social integration policies should be pursued aggressively. For far too long, the interests of ordinary Afghans have been forsaken. The United Nations, with its people-centred orientation, should play an important role in this process.

Fault lines in the new Government are apparent, rooted in the country's bitter ethnic divisions and its culture of "warlordism". Maintaining the Bonn consensus will therefore be a monumental challenge. Undeniably, however, Afghanistan's future is brighter today than it was a few weeks ago. The United Nations and the international community must strengthen their resolve to help Afghanistan meet these challenges head-on and continue to push and cajole the often quarrelsome Afghan parties to remain true to the Bonn spirit.

It remains for the various Afghan leaders to focus their energies on promoting the interests of ordinary Afghans. The ball is squarely in their court. The Secretary-General puts it succinctly in his message to the Afghan leaders gathering in Bonn at the start of the talks:

> "you, who are taking this responsibility, must show unprecedented courage and leadership. You must place the interests of your people first, above all other concerns. Only then will this process — this attempt to break the cycle of misery and destitution, conflict and violence — stand a chance of success." (SG/SM/*8045*)

On the subject of an international security force, my delegation supports the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force as a matter of principle, and we would give favourable consideration to participation within that framework. We note Ambassador Brahimi's justifications for an urgent deployment of a multinational security force in support of the political process. However, now that we have a political settlement in place, immediate work should begin to operationalize a peacekeeping force on the ground in support of the existing political settlement agreed among willing parties. This force should be ready to assume responsibility and take over from the multinational force as soon as practically possible.

Afghan leaders took a promising step towards a stable post-Taliban Government at the meeting in Bonn on 5 December 2001 — an extraordinary event, bringing together representatives of ethnic groups that, historically, have not been able to cooperate. The transition from the Interim Administration to the Transitional Authority will be a trying period if Afghan leaders fail to manifest the requisite political will to sustain the Bonn spirit. There is certainly no lack of resolve on the part of the international community to promote peace, bring humanitarian relief to the desperate Afghans and facilitate reconstruction.

In contemplating their future, our Afghan brothers might find it worthwhile to ponder the following quotation:

> "The greatest thought is God; the greatest thing is love; the greatest mystery is death; the greatest challenge is life; the greatest waste of time is hate; and the most expensive indulgence is pride."

We hope and pray that the new year, and the years that follow, will bring peace and tranquillity to brotherly Afghanistan.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on Afghanistan. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his two separate reports.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September brought about a fundamental change in our security environment, galvanizing the whole world to fight against terrorism with unprecedented unity. At the same time, this global war on terrorism has provided the people of Afghanistan, as well as the United Nations, with a golden opportunity to end the decades-long devastating conflict and rebuild the Afghan nation.

At this juncture, the tasks to be undertaken by the United Nations in Afghanistan are very daunting and multifaceted, encompassing political, military, humanitarian, human rights and economic dimensions. My delegation greatly appreciates the fast and efficient measures taken by the Secretary-General, and his leadership in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. We would also like to pay special tribute to Mr. Brahimi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his exemplary peacemaking efforts, which led all the Afghan parties to a historic political agreement.

The Republic of Korea is committed to doing its utmost to help Afghanistan through these tumultuous times. I would like to take this opportunity to comment on a few issues that my delegation finds particularly critical.

First, regarding the political future of Afghanistan, we congratulate all the Afghan parties that came together and agreed on a detailed political process. We sincerely hope that all Afghan people, in the spirit of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among different ethnic groups and generations, will fully implement the agreement, with the goal of the eventual establishment of a legitimate Government and Afghanistan's reintegration into the international community. During this process, the international community, in particular neighbouring and other interested countries, should extend their full support to Afghanistan, which has been neglected for years. We should all refrain from pursuing any narrow national interests while helping the Afghans in the restoration of their right to peace and stability. The Republic of Korea truly welcomes the launch of the Afghan Interim Authority and wishes to establish a friendly and cooperative relationship with Afghanistan.

Secondly, my delegation would like, in this connection, to point out the importance of maintaining peace and security throughout the extensive territory of Afghanistan. We appreciate the Security Council's continuing attention to and debate on this issue, including its preparations for authorizing the dispatch of international security assistance forces to designated areas of Afghanistan.

Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the Republic of Korea has been consulting closely with other States with a view to participating in the international coalition to fight terrorism in Afghanistan, including through the possible dispatch of medical and transportation support units.

My third point relates to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan — currently the most urgent and critical issue to be addressed by the international community. The dire situation of millions of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons has rapidly deteriorated in recent months. We greatly appreciate the emergency relief efforts of all the humanitarian organizations and their workers, and we earnestly request the Afghan people to ensure the safety and free movement of humanitarian personnel when they enter the country.

The Republic of Korea is in the process of implementing its pledged contribution of emergency humanitarian and economic assistance, worth $12 million in kind and in cash, to Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, in response to the emergency appeal of the Secretary-General in October. We are willing to continue discussing further ways and means of rendering assistance in consultation with other actors in various international forums.

Finally, my delegation welcomes the ongoing discussion among Member States and related organizations on long-term assistance for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. In the light of Afghanistan's large territory and population and of its dire socio-economic situation, this will undoubtedly be a very daunting and complicated task. We hope that a practical and workable master plan, as well as a well-coordinated division of work among those involved in that plan, can be worked out.

The Republic of Korea is actively participating in meetings for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan, and will continue to do so, and it is very willing to play a constructive role in this endeavour.

The day after tomorrow — 22 December — is a historic day for all the Afghan people, stricken by decades of war and conflict. We hope that, with the launch of the Interim Authority, they will be able to put their tragic history behind them and begin a new era of freedom, prosperity and respect for human dignity. The United Nations, respecting their sovereignty, territorial integrity and self-determination, should play a central role in helping them rebuild a democratic Government and a free society in which human rights are once again upheld.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize the important role to be played by women, as primary caregivers and key actors for positive change in building a culture of peace in Afghanistan.

In this regard, my delegation fully supports the draft resolution on Afghanistan, which we have co-sponsored, and reaffirms the Republic of Korea's firm commitment to a new Afghanistan.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): First of all, I would like to commend United Nations Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi and his colleagues on their important contribution to the agreement reached between the four Afghan groups in Bonn earlier this month. The Afghan representatives have shown great courage and leadership.

Norway warmly welcomes the agreement and is pleased to note the Afghan groups' cooperation and readiness to find common ground for an interim administration. The Bonn agreement will be crucial to the efforts to reach a lasting peace in Afghanistan. It is now of great importance that the agreement is implemented, and is respected, by all Afghan parties.

To strengthen the political process it is vital that the international community commit itself to assisting the Afghan people at this crucial time. Norway will continue to lend political support to Mr. Brahimi and to provide financial support to the interim administration in Kabul. It is vital that the interim administration be in a position to function as a governing body as soon as possible. Only then can Afghan ownership of the development process be achieved.

I think it is fair to say that the international community has high hopes that the Afghans and their representatives will live up to their part of this historic undertaking. We expect, first and foremost, that conflicts will be solved and challenges met through peaceful and democratic means. We also expect substantial progress in the field of human rights, in particular with regard to the rights of women and children. To a large degree the legitimacy of the new Afghan authorities will depend on their ability to guarantee the basic human rights of their people. Norway welcomes the efforts for active participation by women in the political process. True representative government in Afghanistan can be achieved only when women are fully included.

Norway will be chairing the Afghanistan Support Group in 2002. The basic objective of this informal group of donors is to contribute to reconciliation and social and economic development, and thus to sustainable peace and progress, in Afghanistan. The enormous humanitarian and reconstruction needs have to be addressed without delay, and the international commitment must have a long-term perspective. The Afghan Support Group will focus on improving donor coordination with respect to the various international efforts and on ensuring that human rights considerations are taken into account when providing aid.

Immediate attention must be paid to areas such as education, food security, mine action and repatriation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons. We want to promote a comprehensive, coordinated and coherent approach that will facilitate the transition to longer-term reconstruction and development. Sufficient resources must be provided for humanitarian response and long-term development activities in order to lay the foundation on which a strong nation can be built.

The changes in the political situation have made the transport of food and other relief items into Afghanistan easier. However, the security situation within the country remains a major obstacle to the distribution of humanitarian goods to those who are most in need. High priority must now be given to the protection of civilians and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

The challenge posed by landmines is a formidable one, but we have made some progress. Afghanistan already has the world's largest demining programme. For reconstruction and resettlement to take place, that effort will need to be further scaled up.

One of the key elements in planning for reconstruction is to avoid the duplication of efforts. It is of the utmost importance to avoid having different agencies trying to drag the process in different directions. Coordination is the key if we are to succeed in giving effective support to the efforts of the Afghan people. There must be a close and continuous connection between humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, so that they form a joint and complementary effort. Recovery and reconstruction must be carried out in tandem with further progress in the political process in Afghanistan.

In connection with international assistance to rebuilding the country, the appalling human rights situation must be improved. Particular attention will have to be paid to restoring women's access to social services and their full participation in productive and economic activities. Women have been effectively excluded from participation in the country's economic, social and political life. This constitutes a violation of human rights. Besides, children have suffered intolerable violations of their basic rights and have had only limited access to health care, education and food. To make up for the misery they have been through, Afghan children should be at the centre of our efforts. In this connection education, particularly for girls, is one of the best investments we can make for the future of Afghanistan. The sooner we invest, the sooner that Afghanistan will benefit from the returns.

In our further planning we need to ensure that our statements about Afghans being in the driver's seat become a reality. We must avoid a massive inflow of people and equipment before we know what we and the Afghans want to achieve, and how. International humanitarian and reconstruction actors should be evaluated on the basis of the long-term impact of what they do, not by who puts up the flag first. We need to build on the capacities of the many local communities that have already established programmes and projects in sectors like education, health, water and sanitation. If we build on the decentralized nature of Afghan society, we will probably have a quicker and more positive impact. In this regard we must make use of the capacities and networks of non-governmental organizations. This will also help to strengthen Afghan civil society. Local authorities are likely to be a more efficient approach to reflect local needs. Working with them is in keeping with Afghan traditions.

The Afghan tragedy has had a formidable impact on neighbouring countries. The influx of displaced persons across the borders has put an unprecedented strain on the societies concerned. Thus all our activities need to have a regional dimension. All steps should be taken in close consultation with Afghanistan's neighbouring countries.

Breaking the vicious circle of war and misery in Afghanistan is long overdue. The Afghans themselves, particularly the women, from all regions and ethnic groups, should be involved in the whole process of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction. The future of Afghanistan must be placed firmly in the hands of the Afghan people. The reconstruction of Afghanistan after 20 years of violent conflict and natural disasters is clearly too large a task to be financed by the small group of traditional donors alone. It is now essential that the international community commit itself to assisting, both politically and financially.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, allow me to express my thanks to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report he has presented on the various aspects of the situation in Afghanistan. I wish also to thank him for his personal commitment to Afghanistan and for his decision to revive the mission of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, which facilitated the successful conclusion of the Bonn conference. There is no doubt that the role that Mr. Brahimi; his Deputy, Mr. Vendrell; and the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) are playing is of great importance in bringing about a lasting political settlement to the Afghan crisis. I reiterate the full readiness of my Government to extend to them all possible support and assistance in their difficult task.

We are pleased to note that, in contrast to the gloomy ambiance that dominated our last debate on Afghanistan in the General Assembly, a great deal of hope and optimism prevails in our debate this year. Now, after more than two decades, there is a realistic prospect for the establishment of a broad-based, representative and multi-ethnic government in factious and war-stricken Afghanistan. In two days, on the basis of the Bonn agreement, which is more or less endorsed by all Afghan parties, an interim authority is to take office in the Afghan national capital — a development whose importance should not be underestimated.

We are happy that there is now a real hope of laying the groundwork necessary to enable the Afghans to leave behind the extreme suffering they have gone through for decades. For my Government, whose interests are best served by the restoration of peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan, this development is a cause for extreme pleasure and delight. We are hopeful that the new environment will lead to a complete halt in the production of and trafficking in drugs, an end to the harbouring of terrorists and extremists on Afghan soil, and the resolution of refugee problems, thereby helping to create stability, which long has been elusive, in Afghanistan and in the region.

The Afghans have now embarked on the relatively lengthy and complex process of reviving unity among Afghan ethnic groups, which is a sine qua non for the Afghan nation and its territorial integrity. Lack of ethnic unity shattered peace and brought about disaster for the Afghan people. The interim authority, which is to lay the groundwork for the convening of emergency as well as constitutional loya jirgas and for the holding of free and fair elections, represents the best hope for reviving Afghan ethnic unity and bringing about peace and normalcy in Afghanistan.

However, there is no room for complacency. The situation in Afghanistan is still precarious and far from stable. The Taliban leaders who are still at large constitute a danger for the nascent Afghan Government. A press conference organized by some Taliban members outside Afghan territory last week indicates, among other things, that at least some elements of the defunct Taliban leadership are intent on playing a disruptive role in future. We believe that they should not be allowed to do so and that any new malicious effort should be nipped in the bud.

The fact that some suspicion and bitterness has developed among certain Afghan leaders in the course of the extended war is another cause for concern. However, we are confident that, in the new environment, all Afghans will rise above sectarian disputes, and that the national interests of Afghanistan and the quest to ensure the well-being of the Afghan people will transcend rivalries and non-essential issues. In this regard, what has followed the collapse of the Taliban is, rather, a cause for hope and optimism. We hope that the Afghan groups will continue to refrain from unlawful acts of reprisal and that amity among groups will take root.

The reconstruction of Afghanistan and the rehabilitation of the country's infrastructure are a must, failing which return to peace and normalcy will remain elusive. Any progress in this field will require sustained international commitment in the years to come. There is no doubt that a generous investment by the international community in rebuilding Afghanistan today will pay off in the form of sparing the region and the entire world from the re-emergence of that country as a source of instability tomorrow. In our view, there is a need to draft a framework for the reconstruction of Afghanistan as soon as possible. We believe that rebuilding the Afghan educational system, encouraging the Afghans to take an active part in the political decision-making process, developing a poppy-substitution programme and funding the return of refugees should figure prominently among the priority tasks during the reconstruction period. We strongly encourage the continuation and intensification of the food-for-education programme, especially for girls. This achieves two goals at once: it helps to feed malnourished Afghan children and, at the same time, provides food incentives to increase student enrolment and attendance. Moreover, we also would like to encourage countries and cities worldwide each to sponsor education in one Afghan province or city.

My country, which has experience in dealing with Afghans and is privileged to share a common language with them, stands ready to help in every possible field to further the objective of the reconstruction process in Afghanistan.

During the years of war and distress in Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been on the side of the Afghan people. We have hosted on our soil for over two decades more than two million Afghan refugees. We have not attempted to confine them in camps. They have had the opportunity to blend in with Iranian society and to work. Despite the large number of refugees we are hosting, we have received minimal international assistance. The combination of these factors, coupled with domestic economic constraints in recent years, has increased the adverse impact of the refugee problem on Iranian society. However, we continue to be fully committed to our moral and legal obligations arising from the historical friendship between the Iranian and Afghan peoples and to the international instruments governing refugee issues. In this context, we expect that the international community also will remain committed to its obligations by providing sufficient assistance to the refugees in Iran, including the necessary funds for the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees, in the framework of the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

I would recall also that my Government, aware of the evil nature of the Taliban leaders, never allowed itself to embark on the path of appeasing them. To the contrary, we spared no effort in assisting the Afghan resistance against the Taliban. We are pleased that our visionary approach paid off in the end and that the United Front, which led the Afghan resistance, played a pivotal and instrumental role in cleansing the Afghan soil of the Taliban leadership.

The Islamic Republic of Iran expects that its concerns will be taken into account in the new era that will follow the collapse of the Taliban. We expect that the new Afghan leaders, with whom we have had a long history of friendship and cooperation, will do their best to uproot poppy cultivation and related activities in their homeland. They are fully aware of the enormous damage we have sustained as a result of drug-trafficking stemming from Afghan territory. We are also fully aware that the situation in the former poppy-growing areas is alarming and stand ready to help and encourage the international community to help in this regard.

Despite the end of war and the collapse of the Taliban, as many as 6 million Afghan people are on the brink of starvation as a result of a generation of war, three years of drought and, more importantly, the policy the Taliban pursued in the last five years. Recent heavy bombing of Afghan territory exacerbated the situation. Therefore, as a first priority, there is an absolutely desperate need to get food to most parts of Afghanistan this winter, especially the Central Highlands; otherwise, the current food crisis may worsen, turn into a refugee crisis and result in the loss of lives and a further influx of refugees into neighbouring countries. To facilitate the provision of assistance to Afghanistan, my Government has taken every possible measure in the border areas and my country is fully prepared to serve as a conduit of food and other basic necessities into that country.

More than three years ago, the Taliban, on its march to militarily control Afghan territory, broke into the Iranian consulate general in Mazar-e-Sharif and cold-bloodedly murdered Iranian diplomats and one journalist. What they did then was the harbinger of what they had in the pipeline for all those whose only fault was being different from them. We believe that those who committed this crime and so many other crimes, including the massacre of people from the Hazara ethnic group in the Afghan Central Highlands, should be held accountable and brought to justice. We fully agree with the Secretary-General when he states in his report that

> "Sustainable peace ... cannot be built on a foundation of impunity. Hence, the Afghan people and their international partners must commit themselves to addressing the problems of the past by ending impunity and ensuring accountability for past abuses." (*A/56/681, para. 83*)

We are pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/55/L.62, which highlights the international community's commitment to helping the Afghans rebuild their country. I would also like to place on record our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Germany and his colleagues for the excellent and professional work they did in carrying out the negotiations and consultations on this draft resolution.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): Once again, we are deliberating an issue which has been a challenge to the international community for decades. It also represents one of those cases in contemporary history in which a poor and dispossessed nation, which had sacrificed so much for the cause of the free world, was treated in turn by the international community with callous indifference and punitiveness. One does not have to dilate upon history, but history would have been different if Afghanistan, at the end of the cold war, had not been left in chaos and conflict to be exploited by the evil forces of violence and hatred.

For years, Afghanistan has been the subject of debates and resolutions at the United Nations, aggravating — not alleviating — the suffering of the people of that war-ravaged country. Their isolation and ostracization drove them to despair and disillusionment and into the hands of Al-Qaeda, a group of non-Afghan runaway dissidents from their own countries who could not find a better hiding place than the shadows of Afghanistan's wilderness and rugged mountains. If the world had remained constructively engaged with the people of Afghanistan and had not turned its back on them, the situation today might have been totally different. Osama bin Laden and his associates would not have exploited Afghanistan or taken advantage of the Afghan traditions of hospitality and friendship, abusing their trust to spread terror across the globe.

For 22 long years, the people of Afghanistan have suffered — and suffered terribly — at the hands of both man and nature. They have been victims of brutal foreign occupation, self-serving exploitation by the free world, a fratricidal civil war, the ruthlessness of power-hungry and bloodsucking warlords and the excesses of oppressive and obscurantist regimes. The United Nations also allowed itself to be used as a tool to punish the Afghans for sins they never committed.

The devastating drought which has afflicted them over the past several years has only aggravated their already severe plight.

Countless Afghans have lost their lives through these difficult and turbulent years. Today, over 6 million Afghans are sheltered as refugees in neighbouring countries and millions more are either internally displaced or face tremendous hardship in their own localities. Rather than receiving the help it deserved as being the last great battlefield of the cold war, Afghanistan was totally isolated and reduced to a wasteland that attracted fugitives and criminals from all over the world.

Today, however, is not the time for remorse or rhetoric or for remaining frozen in the past. These are unusual times, demanding a fresh approach and new thinking in our response to one of the gravest challenges to humanity. As we review the situation in Afghanistan, we must be guided by the need to rectify the mistakes of the past. Nothing is more important in the context of today's agenda item than the urgency of durable peace and stability in Afghanistan and its relevance to the peace and stability of the world at large.

We must also take cognizance of the seriousness of the humanitarian situation in that country, which warrants a corresponding global response in rehabilitation and reconstruction. Now that the international community is fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, we hope it will not walk away from the country once the immediate objectives of the military campaign have been achieved. A country ravaged by war has to be rebuilt. A society torn by conflict has to be healed. All this requires commitment and perseverance. The long-term solution to the problem of terrorism in Afghanistan lies in the restoration of peace and stability and the reconstruction of the country. An Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbours is the surest safeguard against any future terrorist activity emanating from within its borders.

Indeed, the Afghans are not the only victims of the Afghan tragedy. Pakistan has suffered also. For almost two and a half decades, we have been providing shelter to over 3 million Afghans through our own meagre resources and without any appreciable assistance from the outside world. Our economy has been suffering, and continues to suffer, because of the situation in Afghanistan. Rampant terrorism, as well as the culture of drugs and guns that we call the "Kalashnikov culture", tearing apart our social and political fibre, is also a direct legacy of the protracted conflict in Afghanistan. With this bleak scenario, no country in the world has suffered more than Pakistan from the conflict in Afghanistan, and no country could have a greater stake than Pakistan in the return of peace and stability to Afghanistan.

Pakistan fully supports the efforts of the United Nations to bring peace to Afghanistan. We therefore appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General and those of his Special Representative, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi. We fully support Ambassador Brahimi's mandate to facilitate the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan, as well as to assist in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of that war-ravaged country. We hope the United Nations will continue to play its role as a facilitator in helping the Afghans find home-grown solutions to their problems and to bring their country back into the comity of nations as a responsible and law-abiding State.

Here I must also express our profound appreciation to the Government of Germany for hosting the historic Bonn Conference among the Afghan leaders, which resulted in the landmark Bonn Agreement.

Pakistan welcomes the swearing-in of Mr. Hamid Karzai, in two days' time in Kabul, as the head of the Interim Administration. We shall extend our full support and cooperation not only to the Interim Administration and all its members, but also to the subsequent Governments of Afghanistan, transitional or otherwise, in their efforts to restore peace and stability to Afghanistan.

Pakistan remains fully committed to maintaining fraternal ties with Afghanistan and would be ready to assist, as it has always been, in Afghanistan's rehabilitation and reconstruction. To this end, the President of Pakistan proposed addressing the Assembly last month regarding the establishment of an "Afghan trust fund", under United Nations auspices, to assist in humanitarian relief as well as national reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in Afghanistan.

Pakistan considers the Bonn Agreement an important positive development, in that it seeks to bring about a fundamental change in Afghanistan through peaceful means and in a spirit of mutual accommodation among the Afghans. The Agreement,

in spite of its shortcomings, is a first step towards developing a genuinely home-grown, broad-based and multi-ethnic political dispensation in Afghanistan through the convening, in due course, of a Loya Jirga. We hope that this process will lead to the establishment of a genuinely representative Government in Afghanistan that is acceptable to all Afghans, promotes unity and stability and respects its international obligations, including its obligations to its neighbours. Any attempt motivated by intrinsic animosities or rivalries from inside or sponsored by vested interests from outside to pit this landlocked country against any of its neighbours will only prolong the misery and deprivation of its people, delaying its socio-economic and political recovery and keeping the region mired in instability.

The international community, on its part, has to ensure its full support for the United Nations as the Organization oversees the implementation of the Bonn Agreement. This includes ensuring the early deployment, as stipulated in the Agreement, of a United Nations-mandated force for the maintenance of security in Kabul as well as other areas of the country. Efforts are needed to accelerate the deployment of this force and secure the demilitarization of Kabul and other major urban centres where it is expected to take up positions. The international community must also ensure that the "warlordism" that once wreaked havoc across Afghanistan is not given a chance to obstruct the establishment of a stable political dispensation in Afghanistan.

We hope all Afghan factions and groups will avail themselves of this unique opportunity to extricate their country from the abyss in which it has remained for the last two decades. The success of the Bonn Agreement will depend on how the Afghan leaders acquit themselves in rebuilding their country through a mutual spirit of accommodation. The tribal and ethnic structures will remain of special relevance in any future set-up, and in the larger measure, it is up to the Afghans themselves to make or mar the future of their country.

The two-decade-long conflict in Afghanistan has taken the country back to the eighteenth century, if not farther. The country lacks a basic infrastructure as its people remain deprived of their basic necessities. Once peace returns to Afghanistan, humanitarian relief has to be sustained. No peace process can work without commensurate support to rebuild and rehabilitate this war-ravaged country. Therefore, it is equally important to develop concurrently a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation plan, which will be put in place as soon as peace returns to Afghanistan.

It is imperative for the international community to immediately begin work on this plan and arrange the necessary finances to support and sustain it. Any reconstruction effort in Afghanistan must initially entail, at the minimum, the restoration of water-management systems, the revival of agriculture, the reconstruction of infrastructure and transit routes and the rebuilding of institutions, as well as continued humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people, particularly internally and externally displaced persons.

It is needless to emphasize that this time the international community must not walk away from Afghanistan, as it has done in the past. It must demonstrate the political will and the determination to engage and help the Afghan people in rebuilding peace and the economy of their country. The Afghans have been disillusioned by the treatment they have received from the world community in the past. The negative consequences of that neglect are clear for everyone to see. That mistake must not be repeated.

We are turning over a new leaf in Afghanistan. Let this augur well for its people and for the world community. Pakistan, like the rest of the world community, hopes that this new era will bring positive change in Afghanistan. It is thus with hope and commitment that we are cosponsoring the draft resolution before the Assembly. We fully subscribe to its intent to restore peace and normalcy in Afghanistan, as well as to promote relief and reconstruction work there. We hope that the draft resolution will strengthen United Nations efforts in Afghanistan and truly contribute to the achievement of peace, security and development in that country, which needs it so badly.

As we open a new chapter in the Afghan saga, the bitter and unpleasant chapters of the past must be closed. We must look forward, not backward. The United Nations sanctions imposed under Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1333 (2000) represent a painful legacy for the Afghan people. Now that the Taliban have been eliminated, the sanctions regime, which hurts only the people of Afghanistan, must also come to an end. We now have Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which has wider scope and reach and has made the Taliban-specific

resolutions — 1267 (1999) and 1333 (2000) — redundant. Once the current military campaign in Afghanistan has been succeeded, all the resources that were mobilized for intrusive and punitive mechanisms under those resolutions should be placed at the disposal of Ambassador Brahimi so that he can use them, if he so requires, appropriately and constructively, to rebuild Afghanistan. Tomorrow's Afghanistan will involve the United Nations, not as a policeman hunting for criminals, but as a healer and builder, promoting the reconciliation and reconstruction of that war-torn nation.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): It is indeed crucial and timely for the General Assembly to debate the situation in Afghanistan today, two days before the important step of inaugurating the Interim Authority. Needless to say, the establishment of the Interim Authority will be only the beginning of a long process of restoring peace in Afghanistan and ensuring the reconstruction of the country. Yet it is surely an important first step in the right direction.

The next steps for the establishment of a duly elected, legitimate Afghan government, through the process agreed upon in Bonn, will not be easy. Unprecedented in the history of this country long torn by war, this process will require painstaking effort, patience, tolerance and, indeed, a firm and shared commitment to peace on the part of the Afghan people. Ultimately, the key to the success of this process is the will of the Afghan people.

It is also evident, however, that cooperation and support from the international community will be equally important. Above all, given the abundant elements of uncertainty and unpredictability abundant in the local situation — particularly the absence of institutions to ensure domestic security — it is essential for the international community to help maintain security, at least in key areas, pending the establishment of a legitimate government. We therefore hope that the resolution currently under consideration in the Security Council for the deployment of an international security assistance force will be adopted and implemented swiftly.

Humanitarian assistance is another area in which Afghanistan now needs the support and cooperation of the international community. The Government of Japan, in response to the appeal made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, has already pledged to provide up to $120 million for humanitarian assistance, and it will continue to actively support efforts in that area.

In this context, ensuring the safety of humanitarian personnel can never be over-emphasized; it is an important precondition for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and I would like to urge the Interim Administration to take every necessary measure in this regard.

The full cooperation of the international community will be indispensable for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. It is, indeed, the responsibility of the international community to help the Afghan people in their pursuit of the restoration and development of their own country. Moreover, we firmly believe that providing a clear prospect for the reconstruction of Afghanistan will help to strengthen the will of the Afghan people to pursue peace and political stability.

In recognition of this, in January the Japanese Government will host the ministerial meeting for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Building upon the results of a series of international conferences — from the Senior Officials Meeting on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, which the United States and Japan co-chaired in Washington in November, to the Afghanistan Support Group meeting in Berlin this month and the meeting of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Steering Group being held in Brussels today and tomorrow — the conference in Japan is expected to serve as an important opportunity for the international community to provide the Interim Authority and the people of Afghanistan with a hopeful prospect for reconstruction and development.

The draft resolution to be adopted today, of which Japan is a sponsor, is yet another testimony to the commitment of the international community to help ensure a better future for Afghanistan. It is therefore all the more important politically that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus.

In concluding, I would also like to propose that we ask the Secretary-General to convey the content of our discussion today, and the draft resolution that we are about to adopt, to Chairman Hamid Karzai of the Interim Administration, as a message of support from the international community to the Afghan people.

Mr. Pal (India): For some years now, the General Assembly has gone through the motions on this agenda item knowing that our words would fall on deaf ears in Kabul and Kandahar, from where the Taliban rode Afghanistan like an incubus. This year, though, we meet when it seems that the Afghans might be coming to the end of their long night, and their longer nightmare. But if the hope that glimmers now is not to be a false one, the international community, represented here, must accept that it has a duty to help Afghanistan back to peace, progress and prosperity.

At Bonn last month, the Afghans took the momentous first step towards rebuilding their country. Two days from now they will take the next, when the Interim Administration assumes charge, and the pace will then quicken. Journey's end will be a political system that is broad-based and multi-ethnic, and in which all groups will be equitably represented through free and fair elections. This will be a difficult journey. It will take courage and resolve to persevere but, fortunately, in all of Afghanistan's privations, these have never been in short supply.

The Afghans are trying to walk out of the valley of the shadow of death, and the international community must walk with them. But we should give them the help they need and ask for, not what we think is best for them. The Afghans have had enough of fatwas wished upon them by people who thought they had all the answers. Fatwas should not be replaced by fiats. So what should the international community do? Some broad principles would be worth bearing in mind.

We should listen carefully to what the Afghans want and respond to their needs. The best solutions will be home-grown, rooted in Afghan realities. Anything imposed will either be rejected or it will wither. We must use and foster local talent and capabilities. In Afghanistan even more than elsewhere, the only enduring solutions will be those that build on, and develop, local capacities. Afghan women must have an important role to play and a say in Afghan recovery. After the years of neglect they suffered under the Taliban, they will need special attention. There is no magic wand: Afghan recovery will take a very long time, and the international community must stay the course.

International support should be guided by a sense of duty and fellowship, not by the pursuit of narrow self-interest. It should be committed to the unity, sovereignty, territorial unity and independence of Afghanistan. There must be no interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. What Afghans need from their friends is intelligent service, not the attention of intelligence services.

Basing ourselves on these principles, India is ready to do what it can. We have pledged 1 million tons of wheat for Afghans in need, and are in touch with Governments and United Nations agencies, including the World Food Programme, to have this quickly delivered. In October we sent two consignments of medical relief supplies to Dushanbe for Afghan refugees. Tents, quilts, blankets, tea and food are on the way. As soon as Kabul was liberated we flew in a team of doctors with 5 tons of medicines to restart the Indira Gandhi Hospital for Women and Children. We are working to set up mobile hospitals and dispensaries, medical and health-care programmes for women and children and camps to fit artificial limbs. We have sent medical relief supplies and services to other parts of Afghanistan, including Mazar-e-Sharif, and similar assistance is being planned for Herat. We will be prepared to assist the demining effort.

The Prime Minister has announced a line of credit of $100 million for the reconstruction of the infrastructure and economy. Before 1979, Afghanistan was the largest partner in India's technical and economic cooperation programme. The areas covered included dam construction, agriculture, horticulture, hospitals and archaeology. We are ready to offer training and technical assistance appropriate to the needs of Afghanistan in a broad range of sectors.

After these decades of war, Afghanistan's needs are so enormous that they can be met only by a coordinated international response. It would be a pity if we duplicated efforts or if assistance from various sources were to cross purposes. To avoid this, and to make sure that what we do is best for Afghanistan, we should have, preferably under the aegis of the United Nations, an inclusive and transparent mechanism that, at the very least, collates and disseminates information on Afghan needs and the international response.

We are pleased that the Group of 21 has been revived. We have participated in its meetings and believe it has a most useful role to play. We have also associated ourselves with the international efforts to help Afghanistan. We were at Bonn, of course; and we

have taken part in the meetings held last month in Washington and Islamabad on Afghanistan's reconstruction. A team from India is in Brussels now for the follow-up meeting that is taking place there today and tomorrow. We will continue to remain engaged.

It goes without saying that emergency relief, long-term recovery and even Afghanistan's political evolution will depend very much on its being able to set aside the culture of the gun. This is, again, very much in the self-interest of all Afghans, and primarily their responsibility to bear.

In its resolution 1383 (2001) of 6 December 2001, the Security Council demonstrated its confidence in the Afghan groups by calling upon them to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers. The Interim Administration and the structures to follow will want peace in their land. The international community should do everything it can to strengthen their authority and help them rapidly establish an Afghan force. It should do nothing that would undermine the authority of the Interim Administration or that would make it appear powerless in the eyes of its citizens. That would invite further grief.

As the Interim Administration takes office in Kabul, we and all of Afghanistan's friends wish it every success. We would also like to offer a word of caution. All of us, and particularly those of us in Afghanistan's neighbourhood, want to see it stable, democratic and moderate, ruled by Governments that are elected by Afghans, represent their collective interests, protect their fundamental rights and promote economic and social development. Afghans will get this only if the alien and repressive creed that the Taliban represented is not allowed to creep back into governance. The Taliban claimed to represent the Pashtuns, but the foreign codes of behaviour they forced on Afghans were as opposed to pashtunwali, the code of the Pashtuns, as it is possible to be.

The Taliban are in disarray. They may have fled to their boot holes, but obituaries on them would be premature. The hatreds they nurtured, the sponsors who set them up and the missions that drove them have not gone away. They must not be allowed to creep back into governance wearing other masks or swearing new allegiances. The Taliban by any other name are, and must be, anathema.

Before I conclude, allow me to offer two words of thanks, both richly deserved. The first is to Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, who worked so hard to make the Bonn Agreement possible. We are delighted that he will now coordinate the United Nations work as it follows up on the Agreement. The second is to Germany, which hosted the intra-Afghan talks and which has for years shown its commitment to Afghanistan, in part in its piloting of this annual draft resolution, which we have joined in sponsoring.

Ms. Marcus (United States of America): The United States sincerely thanks the German delegation for its timely efforts on draft resolution A/56/L.62, on the situation in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is at a crossroads today, on the eve of the inauguration of the interim authority. The United Nations has played an crucial role in working with the Afghan parties in Bonn on a political settlement, and we applaud the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and his colleagues in that regard. We also applaud the Afghans who gathered at Bonn for their courage in reaching an agreement which gives Afghanistan the hope of a better future. The establishment of the interim authority is the first step in a process that envisages the formation of a permanent broad-based, multi-ethnic Government that respects the rights of women and minorities. This process aims at ushering in a new era of peace and security in an Afghanistan free of terrorism and drugs and at peace with its neighbours.

We recognize the daunting challenges faced by the Afghan people in making that goal a reality. The United States and other members of the international community stand ready to support the Afghan people in their efforts to establish a new Government. We are fully committed to the critical tasks of humanitarian assistance and the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan. The United States has pledged $320 million in humanitarian assistance and is working with international organizations, non-governmental organizations and neighbouring countries to meet the urgent needs of the Afghan people. In November, in Washington, we helped launch the reconstruction process that is intended to help Afghans make the transition from relief dependency to development. This week's meeting in Brussels will help prepare for the ministerial conference in Japan on the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The support of the international

community will be essential to rebuilding Afghanistan and providing for the urgent needs of its people.

Our assistance must also target the most disenfranchised of the Afghans — women and children — who have suffered greatly from Taliban oppression. Liberated from the yoke of the Taliban, women in Afghanistan must be reintegrated as full members of Afghan society and of the Afghan Government. The inclusion of two women in the interim authority was an important signal. With the draft resolution before us we call upon all Afghan groups to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those of women, consistent with the commitments made at Bonn and with their international obligations.

In conclusion, let me add the voice of my delegation to those of other speakers this morning, affirming that the inauguration of the interim authority represents a historic opportunity for the people of Afghanistan. The United States and other members of the international community must help ensure the transition to peace, stability and development in Afghanistan.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): At the outset, I would like to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his commitment and his personal involvement with respect to the issues related to Afghanistan. I wish also to pay special tribute to his Special Representative for Afghanistan, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, for the outstanding work he has done.

Today we are addressing one of the most important issues on the agenda of the United Nations, the situation in Afghanistan, where for the past few months fundamental, crucial changes have been taking place with remarkable speed. In that regard, we cannot but mention the successful conclusion of the United Nations-sponsored talks on Afghanistan, held at Bonn. Ukraine welcomes the signing of the Bonn agreement, which was the first crucial step towards putting an end to the tragic conflict in Afghanistan. We are particularly pleased to point out the active role of the United Nations in the process. Indeed, the people of Afghanistan have an unprecedented opportunity to begin anew, and to build a State that will protect their rights, defend their interests and fulfil their aspirations. My delegation believes that this chance must not be missed — by Afghans or by the international community at large.

The Bonn agreement needs to be put into operation on the ground. Afghanistan will still face a grave humanitarian challenge and acute security problems that must be addressed by the Government and by the world community. Rebuilding the economy; establishing governing institutions; infrastructure; the issue of refugees; protecting human rights; establishing the rule of law; and maintaining peaceful relations with neighbours: these will be among the priority tasks of the transitional authority.

Global support is crucial for Afghanistan in that regard. Of course, the international community will need to make an enormous commitment, politically and financially, to the long-term stability of Afghanistan. Our efforts to assist Afghanistan will be effective only if they are well coordinated and if they become part of an overall political and economic strategy. We are convinced that the United Nations should play the central role in facilitating the transformation of Afghanistan into a secure and stable State.

As a traditional sponsor of draft resolutions on Afghanistan, Ukraine attaches great importance to the adoption today of draft resolution A/56/L.62, which was prepared by the delegation of Germany, a country which plays a special role in the Afghanistan peace process. The draft resolution, so lucidly introduced by Ambassador Hanns Schumacher, reflects in a comprehensive manner the international community's support for the goal of achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan. We reaffirm our willingness to work constructively, together with Afghans and with all interested States, in seeking to promote a peaceful political settlement of the conflict in that country on the basis of decisions taken by the Security Council and by the General Assembly.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): My delegation has already associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. In the light of Turkey's deep-rooted historical ties with Afghanistan, I would like to add the following remarks.

The interim administration in Afghanistan will assume its duties in two days' time. This will mark the beginning of a new era in the troubled recent history of Afghanistan. Indeed, the draft resolution that we are

about to adopt today represents a turning point in the history of the Afghan people.

Through this draft resolution, which addresses in a comprehensive manner the political and humanitarian issues facing Afghanistan, we will be able to display our solidarity with that long-suffering people and demonstrate our determination to assist it in these times of difficulty and hardship.

We view the agreements reached in Bonn as the first step towards the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan. The parties that have made this agreement possible should be commended. I would particularly stress the invaluable role played by the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, and express our appreciation for his tireless efforts.

We expect the Bonn Agreement to serve as a basis for the termination of the great sufferings the Afghan people have gone through for the past 20 years. It is of paramount importance that the process of reconciliation in Afghanistan be an all-inclusive one, bringing together all of the ethnic groups in the country in a spirit of cooperation.

The destiny of Afghanistan need not be a bleak one. The international community has a role to play in this regard. Yet the main responsibility lies with the people of Afghanistan. It is therefore incumbent upon all groups in Afghanistan to set aside narrow interests once and for all, and focus at long last on the noble aim of building a stable homeland in which they can all coexist and prosper, in an atmosphere of harmony and peace.

Turkey has deep-rooted historical and cultural ties with the Afghan people, dating back to the 1920s. As a longstanding friend with no hidden agenda or special interest other than Afghanistan's stability and well-being, we have always been willing to assume an important role in efforts to secure the development of this friendly nation. Turkey's historical experience enables it to provide substantial support to the process of reconciliation and rehabilitation of the country, including the committing of troops to help ensure the necessary conditions for achieving a viable security environment.

We stand ready to augment our contribution to the rebuilding of Afghanistan as a politically united nation that enjoys friendly relations with all of its neighbours. As a country that has been holding regular consultations with all Afghan groups, we will continue our constructive efforts towards that end.

The Afghan people deserve to take their rightful place among the family of world nations as citizens of a respectable and stable State. In this process, it is incumbent upon the international community to respect and preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Centrifugal tendencies would only serve to derail what is already a very delicate and sensitive process.

Today the country we call Afghanistan is in ruins. Human and natural resources are devastated. It is necessary to mobilize the international community urgently to extend a helping hand to alleviate this misery and to intensify the assistance efforts of the relevant United Nations offices and agencies in Afghanistan in helping to improve the living conditions of the Afghan people.

A vast number of internally displaced persons are living in an alarming state of deprivation and are in urgent need of basic assistance, including shelter, heat, food and medicine.

For our part, we are ready to contribute to international efforts aimed at alleviating their hardship. We have already undertaken numerous assistance programmes in order to provide health, educational and humanitarian help, as well as shelter, heat and electricity for displaced families.

Today the Afghan people need to rebuild their unity and harmony. The torments they have gone through can only strengthen their aspiration towards national reconciliation. We should all be ready to contribute to such an outcome. It is with this purpose in mind that Turkey is supporting and cosponsoring this draft resolution.

I would like to conclude by thanking the German delegation for its efficient cooperation in the formulation of this draft resolution, which will, no doubt, constitute an important step in the right direction.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (spoke in Spanish): My delegation would like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and detailed report he has submitted to us in document A/56/681.

Colombia emphatically condemned the acts of international terrorism that took place in September last and, accordingly, unequivocally joined in the Security Council's unanimous support of the military action that is currently taking place in Afghanistan.

Likewise, we acted decisively in that body, assuming specific responsibilities with respect to the only active sanctions regime against international terrorism as a threat to international peace and security, and in particular vis-à-vis resolutions 1267 (1999), 1333 (2000) and 1363 (2001) on the situation in Afghanistan, whose provisions were systematically ignored and violated by the former Taliban regime.

We are aware the United Nations is facing a challenge of unprecedented proportions. The decisions we have taken in the Security Council and those that will be taken on Afghanistan — both in the Council and in the Assembly — will represents the first steps on a path towards an as yet unknown end. The basic objectives will have to be the establishment of peace and the reconstruction of the country.

In order to achieve this, we must continue to take effective decisions that will contribute to a definitive solution to the situation in Afghanistan, in particular with respect to humanitarian issues and to development needs.

Having said that, sustainable peace, reconciliation, reconstruction and development cannot take root in conditions of impunity. In this respect, the Afghan people and the international community must commit themselves to addressing the problems of the past, ensuring that responsibility is taken for the abuses committed, including violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law.

I should like to commend the determined efforts of the international coalition and of the Afghan people to remove the Taliban regime from power and to dismantle the terrorist organizations that were given support and safe haven by that regime.

We are convinced that the greatest responsibility for finding a peaceful solution rests ultimately with the Afghan people themselves. That is why we would like to highlight the agreement reached between Afghanistan's various ethnic and political groups in Bonn on 5 December last. Under this agreement, an Interim Authority was established that will be in place for an interim six-month period, following which an emergency loya jirga will be convened.

We hope that the transitional administration will generate its own capacity to respect and ensure respect for human rights, to meet the needs of the Afghan people, to contribute to peace and to regional and international stability and to eradicate from its territory any links to international terrorism and activities related to the illicit drug trade. Only a political agreement based on the establishment of a broad-based, multi-ethnic and truly representative Government — one that respects human rights and Afghanistan's international obligations and is committed to domestic peace and especially to peace with its neighbours — can effectively lead to lasting peace and national reconciliation.

We also wish to reiterate our hope that the transitional solution will continue to be based on ongoing and flexible dialogue that, as far as possible, involves all Afghan society. Likewise, we hope that these characteristics will be maintained with regard to regional actors and the rest of the international community. This practice is the guarantee for maintaining the legitimacy, coherence and soundness of the decisions to be adopted by this Assembly and the Security Council. That is why there is no doubt that the United Nations should continue playing a central and impartial role in the international efforts towards a settlement of the Afghan conflict.

My delegation is concerned about the enormous humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan arising out of the chronic poverty, hunger, war, breakdown of public order, drought, internal displacement, refugees and abuse of the civilian population that have been particularly prevalent in that country's recent history. Of deep concern are the figures presented by the Secretary-General in his report: over 6 million people are vulnerable and in urgent need of assistance, while the safety and well-being of over 1 million internally displaced persons are precarious.

The work being undertaken by the United Nations system through the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme is essential in addressing this grave situation. It is also important, however, for the international community to focus its efforts on good governance; food security and sustainable ways of living; the provision of basic social services; and the

reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons, despite the many obstacles.

Furthermore, we deem it important to ensure the full, equitable and effective participation of women in cultural, economic, political and social life and in the decision-making process at all levels of the State. We therefore urge the various Afghan groups to protect and promote the equal rights of men and women, especially in the areas of education, work and health care and benefits.

We wish expressly to recognize those Governments of the region that have assumed the responsibility of offering humanitarian assistance to thousands of Afghan refugees who have had to flee their homes in order to survive the war. We also express our appreciation to the humanitarian workers, particularly those of the United Nations, who have made tremendous sacrifices in bringing valuable assistance to mitigate the harmful humanitarian consequences of the actions and omissions of the Taliban regime, domestically and outside Afghanistan.

Likewise, we appreciate the contributions of the United Nations system, all Member States and international and non-governmental organizations, which have responded positively and continue to respond with humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. The challenge to the United Nations requires us to accelerate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Afghans, which means helping them along the path towards the construction of a stable and united country after more than 20 years of war. We appeal to the donor community to continue sharing the responsibility of overcoming the serious humanitarian and economic crisis in that country.

My delegation also offers its full support for the Bonn agreement of 5 December and congratulates Ambassador Brahimi for having effectively concluded the process with that agreement.

I conclude by expressing my delegation's support for the consensus adoption of the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, which reflects the concerns of the international community and offers the greatest possible support to the efforts of the United Nations and Afghanistan to promote peace in that country. Furthermore, the adoption of the draft resolution will be an excellent opportunity to send a message of solidarity and support to the transitional administration that will assume its functions in Afghanistan on Saturday, pursuant to the Bonn agreement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): When we speak of Afghanistan, we do so with a sense of déjà vu. For decades now, we have spoken on Afghanistan within this hallowed Hall. We have adopted resolutions and focused our attention on that country, but the focus was only momentary. The sense of urgency evaporated when the immediate concerns were removed and the land and the people were left in the lurch. We are all aware of the horrendous consequences that followed.

Today, once again we turn our attention to that country now that the realization has dawned on us that we ignored it at our own peril. It became the breeding ground of terrorism, the haven of unreason. The Taliban-Al Qaeda nexus was the bleakest era in Afghan history. By now, hopefully, much of these evils have been eliminated. The world was united towards that goal.

Bangladesh sits on the Security Council and is deeply involved in the deliberations on Afghanistan. We will support the draft resolution shortly to be adopted there. We pay tributes to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, for bringing together the parties and setting them on the path to peace. We congratulate the interim administration headed by Mr. Hamid Karzai, which is about to assume office and responsibilities in Kabul. We urge all groups to abjure intramural rivalries and to cooperate with the global community in an endeavour that can only result in their good.

We are now on the threshold of deploying an international security assistance force with wide participation. We commend the United Kingdom, France and others that have taken initiative in this and shown leadership.

Beyond that, there may be a need for a sustained United Nations-sanctioned peacekeeping presence. Overtly humanitarian operations, such as demining, must begin as soon as possible. Most importantly, we are now looking towards the phase of rehabilitation and reconstruction in Afghanistan. We thank all the donors that have come forward in its support. The United States, Japan, the European Union and Norway, among others, deserve a special mention in this regard. We should extend every cooperation to the United Nations Development Programme and Mr. Mark Malloch

Brown, its Administrator, in their responsibilities in this sphere.

Bangladesh may have many and varied constraints, but as a vibrant, pluralist community of 130 million, it is also one of the largest democracies in the world. Through indigenously evolved ideas of microcredit and non-formal education, we have brought about among us a societal transformation, including the empowerment of women. These experiences are relevant to Afghanistan. Bangladesh, as a regional country, is prepared to share them with our Afghan brethren. We believe there must be a South-South dimension to the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Sharing of best practices in a comparable milieu is not only helpful but essential.

The 4 million refugees must return soon. It will be better still if they are able to do so before the loya jirga is elected, so that they can take part in the decision-making process and thereby be mainstreamed.

The empowerment of women is crucial to Afghanistan's future. This cannot be achieved by diktat, but only by providing them access to the means to play an economic role. This is also where Bangladesh's experience in microcredit and non-formal education would be relevant. The increasing social role of women will help make human rights a central focus. Hopefully, it will also help create a gentler, more tolerant society.

The great game in Afghanistan — the relentless jockeying for power by all actors — must come to a close. It has caused one of the greatest tragedies of our times. Let us bring down the curtain on this sad drama. Let us also herald the beginning of a new dawn for Afghanistan and its people. The draft resolution that we have cosponsored will further the achievement of this goal. We applaud Germany's role in bringing it to fruition.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada): We would like to thank the Mission of Germany for its coordination of this resolution. The resolution provides needed guidance from the General Assembly on the evolving political, security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

Canada views the impending inauguration of the Interim Administration in Afghanistan as a crucial first step towards a decent future for the suffering Afghani people. This is the first real opportunity for a sustainable and lasting peace in a country that has known only strife and misery for the past 20 years. Above all, the Afghan leaders are to be commended for their decision to reach this potentially historic agreement and for taking this courageous step towards a better life for their people.

(*spoke in French*)

We would like to thank the Special Representative, Mr. Brahimi, and his team for the key role that they played in the talks Bonn. We will continue to rely on his wise counsel during the reconciliation, reconstruction and long-term development process in Afghanistan. We hope that the United Nations will continue to respond coherently to the challenges posed to us by Afghanistan. To ensure a joint and effective strategy, all of the United Nations sectors, including policy, security, rights of the individual, humanitarian and development sectors, must be fully coordinated.

(*spoke in English*)

There can be no question that the Interim Administration will require considerable support from the international community. Canada is committed to working with the Administration to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance and to support the transition to democratic governance. Any future Government should, in our view, represent the broad spectrum of Afghans and ensure the full and equal participation of women in the new governing process. The job ahead for Afghanistan requires the talents of all of its people, men and women together.

We expect the new authority to ensure full respect for Afghanistan's obligations under international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law. Stability in Afghanistan is crucial to the overall effort to combat terrorism. We are encouraged by the recent successes of the military campaign against terrorism in Afghanistan. At the same time, we are very concerned by the continued insecurity throughout the country, the lawlessness and reprisals. The deployment of an international stabilization force will make a very important contribution towards a stable political transition in Afghanistan.

As many who have spoken before me have already noted, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan was already dire prior to the events of 11 September. We remain concerned about the safety of

Afghan civilians, and we call on all parties to ensure their access to protection and assistance. We applaud the efforts of the United Nations, the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations in continuing to meet the needs of vulnerable Afghans throughout the recent crisis, and we note in particular the courage and dedication of local Afghan staff. We will continue to emphasize the importance of building and supporting Afghan civil society.

Canada has provided significant humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan over the past 10 years, including substantial aid in response to the current crisis. We remain committed to providing humanitarian assistance, and we will participate actively in the reconstruction process. We are very pleased with the humanitarian response of the United Nations to date. The Organization demonstrated important leadership in preparing timely and credible contingency plans. This must continue, particularly for the transition from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction. We note the continuing relevance of the coordination structures in place in Afghanistan for humanitarian and development assistance, and we would encourage their full utilization, including by the Afghan Support Group. We look forward to the outcome of the consultations currently under way in Brussels among the Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group and the forthcoming donor conference in Tokyo.

The recent return of Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries reflects the optimism that many Afghans share about their country's future. We recognize and appreciate the burden that neighbouring countries have shouldered over the past 20 years in meeting the needs of displaced Afghans. We encourage countries hosting Afghan refugees to continue to provide protection to those in need and to cooperate fully with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in facilitating their safe return and voluntary repatriation once conditions in Afghanistan permit.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): The tragic events of 11 September have stunned humanity and exposed the brutality of terrorism. They have brought together a broad coalition of nations in a concerted fight against it. This coalition could prove to be a watershed in international relations, underlining the imperative for nations to work collectively to address common challenges. Nepal has supported the measures taken to stamp out the scourge of global terrorism.

The war against global terror, led by the United States, has made remarkable progress. The repressive and obscurantist Taliban regime in Afghanistan has collapsed; Al-Qaeda has been decimated and its leaders are on the run; and terrorist networks, communication channels and financing have been severely disrupted. The Bonn talks succeeded in paving the way for an Interim Administration. For the first time in more than two decades, the people of Afghanistan can heave a sigh of relief and put war and cares behind them. The Afghan people can now hope for a peaceful future, and the international community for a decline in international terrorism and improved security.

Challenges, however, remain. Al Qaeda is down, but not out yet. There are many other terrorist organizations wreaking havoc in different parts of the world. They need to be taken out if we are to remove the menace of terrorism from the face of the earth. The need to reduce poverty, illiteracy and disease and to promote sustainable development and justice remains as urgent as ever if we are to make sure that terrorists never again find an opportunity to exploit the vulnerabilities of the deprived and dispossessed in an attempt to advance their evil designs.

As the war on terror winds down in Afghanistan, the international community's attention must now be focused on helping the interim Government in Afghanistan to safeguard and consolidate peace and stability and to mount a massive humanitarian support campaign. We welcome the international community's initiative to embark on a multinational force for peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan, and Nepal will be more than happy to contribute peacekeepers to achieve peace and stability in a fellow South Asian country.

The next urgent priority for Afghanistan and for the international community must be to usher in the democracy and development that the poor and repressed Afghans so desperately need. It is absolutely essential to prevent that hapless country from reverting to bad times, as well as to foster a peaceful, prosperous and just society in Afghanistan.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like at the outset to express my sincere gratitude to the delegation of Germany for having done such a fine job in preparing the draft resolution now before us. For many years, Germany has spared no effort in working to normalize the situation in Afghanistan and

to coordinate our work here at the United Nations on that issue.

The draft resolution objectively describes the situation and takes into account the interests of Afghanistan. Its provisions will certainly be conducive to the formation of a broad-based, legitimate Government, which in the final analysis, will make it possible to achieve stability in Afghanistan and lead to the establishment of normal, good-neighbourly relations with neighbouring countries, in keeping with the norms of international law.

Uzbekistan supports the Agreement that was reached at the Conference in Bonn, held under the auspices of the United Nations, with regard to the settlement of affairs in Afghanistan, and we endorse the formation of the Interim Authority, headed by Mr. Karzai. We believe that that Agreement is a first step towards the peaceful settlement of the situation, leading to a compromise solution among the various parties and to the development, on that basis, of stable state institutions in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan, as an immediate neighbour of Afghanistan, has a deep understanding of the grief and sorrow that has been inflicted on the long-suffering Afghan people. For over 20 years there has been conflict in Afghanistan, and generations have grown up knowing nothing but bloodshed. Because of the many years of war, there has been considerable mistrust among the various parties representing different ethnic and territorial groups.

Given all of those factors, which have a negative influence on the situation in the country, a number of difficulties remain that represent obstacles to the achievement of peace. It is essential to achieve peace in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan is, of course, in favour of the rapid restoration of stability to that country, and we are sparing no effort in contributing to the humanitarian assistance that the Afghan people so desperately need. Almost 6,000 tons of humanitarian assistance has been delivered to Afghanistan recently through the territory of my country, from both United Nations and other humanitarian agencies.

In November, the bridge over the Amu Darya River was reopened, enabling representatives of the United Nations and other international organizations to deliver relief supplies, thus taking a further step towards alleviating the dire situation of the Afghan people.

The enormous arsenals of weapons and various types of ammunition that were stockpiled in the territory of Afghanistan during the war years is a very serious issue that might not only complicate the situation and make it more acute, but also, perhaps, lead to the creation of new hotbeds of tension. According to experts, there are millions of light weapons, as well as heavy artillery and other arms, in Afghanistan. We are, of course, deeply concerned about the fact that such weapons are still in the hands of various unregulated militias. A considerable number of weapons also remain in the hands of the civilian population. It is important to recognize that this enormous collection of weapons could be used by hostile parties in an attempt to resolve their inter-ethnic, religious and other differences. Unfortunately, that possibility cannot be ruled out at present.

Any armed conflict or confrontation in Afghanistan could lead to the re-escalation of the war and could, of course, increase tension and instability in the region as a whole. We are convinced that the gradual process of achieving stability and peace in Afghanistan should go hand in hand with the resolution of problems relating to the enormous build-up of weapons still to be found in Afghanistan as a result of the decades of war. We believe that the various specialized agencies within the United Nations system have a crucial role in this respect and that the Security Council has an essential part to play in resolving the issue of eliminating the stockpiles of arms and weaponry in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan supports the draft resolution before us, and we hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that, in order to allow time for the Fifth Committee to review the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.62, action on the draft resolution is postponed.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.90

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

90th plenary meeting
Friday, 21 December 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Reports of the Second Committee

The President: The General Assembly will consider the reports of the Second Committee on agenda items 95 to 107 and 12. I request the Rapporteur of the Second Committee, Ms. Jana Simonová of the Czech Republic, to introduce the reports of the Second Committee in one intervention.

Ms. Simonová (Czech Republic), Rapporteur of the Second Committee: I have the honour to present for the Assembly's consideration the following reports of the Second Committee on the agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

Under agenda item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 23 of document A/56/571, the adoption of three draft resolutions and, in paragraph 24, the adoption of three draft decisions.

Agenda item 95 is entitled "Macroeconomic policy questions". Under sub-item (a), "Trade and development", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 18 of document A/56/558/Add.1, the adoption of three draft resolutions.

Under sub-item (b), entitled "International financial system and development", the Second Committee, in paragraph 6 of document A/56/558/Add.2, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under sub-item (c), entitled "Science and technology for development", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 12 of document A/56/558/Add.3, the adoption of two draft resolutions.

Under sub-item (d), entitled "External debt crisis and development", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 6 of document A/56/558/Add.4, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 96, entitled "Sectoral policy questions", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 16 of document A/56/559, the adoption of three draft resolutions.

Agenda item 97 is entitled "Sustainable development and international economic cooperation". Under sub-item (a), entitled "Women in development", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 6 of document A/56/560/Add.1, the adoption of one draft resolution. Members should note that the report refers to "women and development", whereas it should read "women in development".

Under sub-item (b), entitled "Human resources development", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 6 of document A/56/560/Add.2, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under sub-item (c), entitled "High-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 7 of document A/56/560/Add.3, the adoption of one draft resolution and, in paragraph 8, the adoption of one draft decision.

Under sub-item (d), entitled "Implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the

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01-71024 (E)

Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, and implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 5 of document A/56/560/Add.4, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 97, entitled "Sustainable development and international economic cooperation", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 3 of document A/56/560/Add.5, the adoption of one draft decision.

Agenda item 98 is entitled "Environment and sustainable development". Under sub-item (a), entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 10 of document A/56/561/Add.1, the adoption of one draft resolution and, in paragraph 11, the adoption of one draft decision. With regard to this document, I would like to point out that the United States made a statement before the adoption of the draft resolution and that the text of paragraph 7 of the report should therefore be corrected by inserting the name of the United States of America before that of Belgium.

Under sub-item (b), entitled "International strategy for disaster reduction", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 10 of document A/56/561/Add.2, the adoption of two draft resolutions.

Under sub-item (c), entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 9 of document A/56/561/Add.3, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under sub-item (d), entitled "Convention on Biological Diversity", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 6 of document A/56/561/Add.4, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under sub-item (e), entitled "Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 6 of document A/56/561/Add.5, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under sub-item (f), entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 9 of document A/56/561/Add.6, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under sub-item (g), entitled "Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 6 of document A/56/561/Add.7, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 98, entitled "Environment and sustainable development, the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 12 of document A/56/561/Add.8, the adoption of two draft resolutions and, in paragraph 13, the adoption of one draft decision.

Agenda item 99 is entitled "Operational activities for development". Under sub-item (a), entitled "Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 6 of document A/56/562/Add.1, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under sub-item (b), entitled "Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 11 of document A/56/562/Add.2, the adoption of one draft resolution and, in paragraph 12, the adoption of one draft decision.

Under agenda item 100, entitled "International migration and development, including the question of the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development to address migration issues", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 9 of document A/56/563, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 101, entitled "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 10 of document A/56/564, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 102, entitled "Implementation of the Habitat Agenda and outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on this topic", the

Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 16 of document A/56/565, the adoption of two draft resolutions.

Under agenda item 103, entitled "Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 10 of document A/56/566, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 104, entitled "Training and research", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 11 of document A/56/567, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 105, entitled "Globalization and interdependence", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 9 of document A/56/568, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 106, entitled "Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 12 of document A/56/569, the adoption of one draft resolution and, in paragraph 13, the adoption of one draft decision.

Under agenda item 107, entitled "High-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development", the Second Committee recommends, in paragraph 14 of document A/56/570, the adoption of one draft resolution and, in paragraph 15, the adoption of two draft decisions.

Before I conclude, may I take this opportunity to thank most sincerely our Chairman, Mr. Francisco Seixas da Costa, Permanent Representative of Portugal, for his excellent leadership, as well as the Vice Chairman, Mr. Garfield Barnwell of Guyana; Mr. Dharmansjah Djumala of Indonesia; and Mr. Felix Mbayu of Cameroon for their extraordinary collaboration and partnership during this most successful Second Committee.

On behalf of the Bureau, let me express our high appreciation to all facilitators and delegations who actively participated in negotiations and contributed to the efficient and timely completion of the work of the Second Committee.

Finally, may I also thank the Secretariat, particularly Ms. Peggy Kelley and her team, but also all others who provided their outstanding assistance to me and all other members of the Bureau.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Second Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

Statements will therefore be limited to explanation of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Second Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Second Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Second Committee. This means that where recorded votes were taken, we will do the same, unless the Secretariat has been notified otherwise in advance.

I should also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote the recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Second Committee.

Agenda item 95

Macroeconomic policy questions

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/558)

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/56/558?

It was so decided.

(a) Trade and development

Report of the Second Committee
(A/56/558/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 18 of its report.

The Assembly will turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "International trade and development".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/178).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution II was adopted by 100 votes to 1, with 46 abstentions (resolution 56/179).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution III. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/180).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 95?

It was so decided.

(b) International financial system and development

Report of the Second Committee
(A/56/558/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution is entitled, "Towards a strengthened and stable international financial architecture responsive to the priorities of growth and development, especially in developing countries, and to the promotion of economic and social equity".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/181).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 95?

It was so decided.

(c) **Science and technology for development**

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/558/Add.3)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 12 of its report.

The Assembly will turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Science and technology for development".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/182).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "World Summit on the Information Society".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/183).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 95?

It was so decided.

(d) **External debt crisis and development**

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/558/Add.4)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution is entitled "Enhancing international cooperation towards a durable solution to the external debt problems of developing countries".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/184).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 95?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 95 as a whole.

Agenda item 96

Sectoral policy questions

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/559).

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 16 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Business and development".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/185).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of funds of illicit origin and returning such funds to the countries of origin".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/186).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa, (1993-2002)".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution III. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/187).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 96.

Agenda item 97

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Reports of the Second Committee (A/56/560 and Add.5)

The President: We turn first to the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/56/560.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/56/560?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 3 of its report contained in document A/56/560/Add.5.

The draft decision is entitled "Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/172".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 97.

Agenda item 97 (*continued*)

(a) Women in development

Report of the Second Committee
(A/56/560/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/188).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 97?

It was so decided.

(b) Human resources development

Report of the Second Committee
(A/56/560/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/189).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 97?

It was so decided.

(c) High-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership

Report of the Second Committee
(A/56/560/Add.3)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 7 of its report, and on the draft decision recommended by the Committee in paragraph 8 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "High-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership". The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/190).

The President: We now turn to the draft decision, entitled "Summary by the President of the General Assembly of the high-level dialogue on the theme 'Responding to globalization: facilitating the integration of developing countries into the world economy in the twenty-first century'".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 97?

It was so decided.

(d) Implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, and implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade

Report of the Second Committee (A/54/560/Add.4)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 5 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, and implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/191).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 97?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 97 as a whole.

Agenda item 98

Environment and sustainable development

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/561 and Add.8)

The President: We turn first to the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/56/561.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/56/561?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 12 of its report contained in document A/56/561/Add.8, and to the draft decision recommended by the Committee in paragraph 13 of the same report.

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I, entitled "Status of preparations for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/192).

The President: The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-first session". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/193).

The President: We next turn to the draft decision, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on products harmful to health and the environment".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 98.

Agenda item 98 (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Report of the Second Committee
(A/56/561/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and a draft decision recommended by the Committee in paragraph 11 of the same report.

I should like to inform members that action on the draft resolution is postponed to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on the draft resolution as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budget implications is available.

We now turn to the draft decision, entitled "Documents relating to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 98.

(b) International strategy for disaster reduction

Report of the Second Committee
(A/56/561/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/194).

The President: The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction". May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/195).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 98?

It was so decided.

(c) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee
(A/54/561/Add.3)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/196).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 98?

It was so decided.

(d) Convention on Biological Diversity

Report of the Second Committee
(A/56/561/Add.4)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/197).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 98?

It was so decided.

(e) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/561/Add.5)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution is entitled "Further implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/198).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 98?

It was so decided.

(f) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/561/Add.6)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/199).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 98?

It was so decided.

(g) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/561/Add.7)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/200).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 98?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 99

Operational activities for development

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/562)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft decision is entitled "Report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 99.

(a) Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/562/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/201).

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 99?

It was so decided.

(b) Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/562/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 11 of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 12 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/202).

The President: We shall now turn to the draft decision entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community".

The Second Committee adopted the draft decision. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 99?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 99 as a whole.

Agenda item 100

International migration and development, including the question of the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development to address migration issues

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/563)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The draft resolution is entitled "International migration and development".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take that it is the wish of the Assembly to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/203).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 100?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 101

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/564)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Fiji, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea.

The draft resolution was adopted by 148 votes to 4, with 4 abstentions (resolution 56/204).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 101?

It was so decided.

Mr. Balzan (Malta), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda item 102

Implementation of the Habitat Agenda and outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on this topic

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/565)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 16 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/205).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/206).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 102.

Agenda item 103

Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/566)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

The draft resolution is entitled "Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), including the proposal to establish a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/207).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 103?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 104

Training and research

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/567)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 11 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "United Nations Institute for Training and Research".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/208).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Group of 77, to make an explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Tootoonchian (Islamic Republic of Iran): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to make a few pertinent comments on agenda item 104 as it relates to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the resolution just adopted.

We wish to recall that, in his report in document A/56/615, the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly that he could not, as the Assembly had requested of him in resolution 55/208 of 20 December 2000, reclassify the rental rates and maintenance costs charged to UNITAR with a view to alleviating the Institute's financial difficulties, which are aggravated by the current practice of charging commercial rates, taking into account that other organizations affiliated with the United Nations enjoy such privileges. In effect, the Secretary-General advised that only the General Assembly has the authority to do such reclassification.

The General Assembly, in fact, has not done any such reclassification yet. The financial situation of UNITAR with respect to its General Fund remains very poor, considering the fact that the Institute receives no subsidy from the United Nations regular budget and that it provides its training programmes free of charge. Until such a desirable remedial measure is taken — and my Group hopes that it will be sooner than later — it is pertinent to observe that our Assembly this year is requesting the Secretary-General to clarify the reason why the Institute does not benefit from rental rates and maintenance costs similar to those enjoyed by other United Nations-affiliated organizations and to submit proposals on how to waive or reduce the rental rates and maintenance costs charged to the Institute. The resolution also calls on the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its next session, including details on the status of contributions to, and the financial situation of, the Institute, as well as on the use of its services by Member States.

The Group of 77 and China supported and joined in the consensus on this resolution. That was on the basis of our understanding that any demand that UNITAR meet its financial obligations on rent and maintenance costs at commercial rates would be made upon the completion of full consideration of the aforementioned details, to be made available by the next session, as requested, thus enabling the General Assembly to reach a decision that will impact positively on the financial situation of UNITAR and allow it to continue its good work.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 104?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 105

Globalization and interdependence

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/568)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 9 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/209).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 105?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 106

Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/569)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 12 of its report and a draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 13 of the same report.

I should like to inform members that action on the draft resolution is postponed to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on the draft resolution as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budget implications is available.

We turn to the draft decision, entitled "Documents relating to the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 106.

Agenda item 107

High-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/570)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 14 of its report and on two draft decisions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 15 of the same report.

The Assembly will turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "International Conference on Financing for Development".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/210).

The Acting President: We turn now to the two draft decisions.

Draft decision I is entitled "Format of the International Conference on Financing for Development".

The Second Committee adopted draft decision I. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision II is entitled "Provisional rules of procedure for the International Conference on Financing for Development".

The Second Committee adopted draft decision II. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 107.

Agenda item 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Second Committee (A/56/571)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 23 of its report and on the three draft decisions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 24 of the same report.

I should like to inform members that action on draft decision I is postponed to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on draft decision I as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budget implications is available.

The Assembly will turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/211).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Global Code of Ethics for Tourism".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/212).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Public administration and development".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution III. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/213).

The Acting President: We next turn to the draft decisions.

As announced earlier, action on draft decision I is postponed.

Draft decision II is entitled "Documents relating to the report of the Economic and Social Council".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision II?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: The Second Committee adopted draft decision III, entitled "Biennial programme of work of the Second Committee for 2002-2003". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision III was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 12.

Agenda item 32

Multilingualism

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/656)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.44/Rev.1)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.44/Rev.1.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): We are about to begin an important, even essential, debate regarding the life of the Organization.

This is the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, a dialogue of cultures. We had an impassioned debate on this subject that reflects what this house should be — the family of all nations united. Naturally, the vehicle for this dialogue is language — that is, our languages.

This is an issue that must bring us together. It would, indeed, be paradoxical and unfortunate if the dialogue among cultures were to be carried out in our respective languages while we remained divided with regard to those languages.

We are approaching this debate with a straightforward idea in mind: that the diversity of our cultures and languages is a great asset for humankind. Language is, for each individual, the most important asset, which is passed to him through education. For humankind, linguistic diversity is a source of enrichment that must be preserved. For the United Nations, cultural and linguistic diversity are benefits, and it is our duty to ensure that the rules of the game are duly respected.

We approached this debate and the elaboration of the draft resolution with the desire to better understand the problems that confront us all in a spirit of mutual respect. We are deeply convinced that on this particular issue we must maintain real consensus. Languages should bring us closer together, not divide us.

In this spirit, we have already made one request for the postponement of action on the draft resolution because, when discussing the issue with delegations, we gained the impression that we had not yet reached true consensus. Since we made that request, we have contacted all delegations concerned so as to listen to their comments and consider their problems.

The first problem arises with regard to recruitment here and in other institutions within the United Nations family. In this respect, there are basically three groups of countries that face very different problems. Each problem should be duly considered, and each group of countries should take note of the difficulties faced by others.

The first group of countries facing problems is represented here by, for example, Japan — I would like to pay tribute Ambassador Yukio Satoh, and I thank him for his understanding — as well as by Germany, Korea and Thailand, among others. These are great countries that speak languages that are not considered official languages of the United Nations. It is essential that we appreciate the specific problems faced by these countries, whose young people, full of enthusiasm and eager to serve the United Nations, cannot rely on their mother tongue in order to be recruited into the United Nations family. We should be mindful of their problems.

The second group is made up of all of those countries from the South that have a mother tongue and a language of communication. India is one such country — and I should like to pay tribute to the representative of India, who is here in the Hall. It is a country that has many mother tongues, as well as a language of communication — English. This situation also applies to Nigeria, South Africa and other countries. We should try to understand their problem, which is quite straightforward. Their universities do not have the financial means to teach — over and above the mother tongue — a language of communication other than English at that level. We should try to understand that.

The third category of countries facing problems is made up of those whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages of the United Nations and whose language of communication is not English, but one of the other official languages. Such difficulties would be faced, for example, by a young Bolivian national whose mother tongue was Quechua but whose language of communication was Spanish. This situation applies to a number of countries in Latin America, the Arab world and from French-speaking countries. Senegal, for example, has a mother tongue and a language of communication, which is French.

Given this very diverse background, we tried to draw up a paragraph in the draft resolution that could take into account the concerns of the various groups. I hope and believe that we managed to achieve this. I would like to read out the form of words that we came up with after lengthy consultations with the various groups.

Paragraph 5 of the draft resolution in A/56/L.44/Rev.1 reads as follows:

> "Urges the Secretariat, when recruiting staff, to take into account the knowledge of an official language of the United Nations, in addition to the language of general parlance within the country of the candidates or their mother tongue, whether or not the latter is an official language of the United Nations".

The language of the paragraph might seem a little complicated, but it is designed is to meet the concerns of all the countries Members of the United Nations family, and I believe that it does so. Of course, this is an important issue, because when recruiting young generations into the Secretariat and United Nations

agencies, it is important that the concerns of the 189 Member States be taken into account.

A second issue which deserved in-depth discussion concerned the promotion of staff members once they had been recruited by the Secretariat. Paragraph 4 of the draft resolution deals with that matter. It refers specifically to Article 101 of the Charter, and I believe that it is important to underscore that the only criteria governing promotion should be competence, efficiency and professional skills, with, as the Charter states in Article 101, due account being taken of equitable geographic distribution. At the same time, in order to work in accordance with the spirit of the Charter, I believe it is essential to encourage Secretariat staff to learn a language additional to the official United Nations language that they already speak when they are recruited. That is the spirit of paragraph 4 of the draft resolution.

There are also a number of issues that are of growing concern to many delegations in their daily lives: the problem of interpretation in conferences and meetings, and the problem of the time it takes to translate documents into the official languages. These problems are purely organizational in nature, and I believe that the General Assembly should encourage the Secretariat to organize itself better so that interpretation and translation services can be carried out more efficiently and translations produced more quickly.

One could argue that all this costs money. We have verified this with the Secretariat and it has said no, that this is a draft resolution without budgetary implications. The Secretariat stands ready to confirm this. The fact is that, whether it is done sooner or done later, translating a document always involves cost. We are simply asking the Secretariat to organize itself so that translations into the official languages are available more quickly.

We worked at length with the various delegations on the basis of the excellent report prepared by the Secretary-General on this important issue. The Secretary-General has appointed a new Coordinator for Multilingualism, namely, our friend Miles Stoby. We believe this is a very good starting point to making further progress. However, the 101 sponsors of the draft resolution — France is the one-hundred and second sponsor — realized that we had not yet achieved complete consensus on this subject.

Some have said that the budgetary implications of the draft resolution had to be reviewed. Fine, let us do so. Others have said that some of the wording had to be reviewed by their capitals. Let us take the time to do that. Therefore, in the spirit of patient dialogue to achieve a genuine consensus decision on the issue of language diversity — a topic that should never divide us but, rather, should bring us closer together — France, with the agreement of the 101 other sponsors, suggests that we not take a decision on the draft resolution today and that we put off its adoption to a date to be determined when the Assembly reconvenes next year, so that we can adopt it unanimously and with full understanding of the issue. We believe that, on this issue, we all have to be clear as to what we want to achieve, and then decide together to act in unison. We therefore suggest that there be a postponement on a decision on this draft resolution until we reconvene, at the beginning of next year, with a genuine consensus.

Mr. Chandra (India): It is sad, but fitting, that we take up this agenda item on multilingualism on a day when we have learned of the death of President Léopold Senghor of Senegal, because no one understood better than he did what true multilingualism meant and the need to cultivate a knowledge of languages to bridge the apparent gaps between cultures and civilizations. He thought that African and Asian languages — so different as to seem to be the voices of completely separate cultures — had similarities that revealed an ancient common route. Believing, on the basis of his own scholarship, that there were linkages between the Dravidian languages of India and languages spoken in West Africa, President Senghor set up a chair in Dravidian studies at the University of Dakar to explore, celebrate and develop those links between Africa and India, and between our culture and languages. We pay tribute to his vision.

Multilingualism is a mixed blessing. It is a Babel that divides; it is only very rarely a Pentecostal gift of tongues. Of course, being monolingual promotes insularity rather than unity. Several countries, not just two, are divided by a common language. It is important therefore to know both the power and the limits of language. In our region a country created on the basis of religion broke up on the basis of language. Elsewhere nations that share a language have been torn apart by religion. The United Nations certainly needs to seriously discuss the challenges of multilingualism.

It is a challenge with which we grew up in India. Every Indian learns his mother tongue; and all Indians learn Hindi, which is our official language. Very large numbers of Indians live outside the Indian states where their mother tongues are spoken, and they learn the language of their adopted states. All Indian languages are complex. Almost none share a script, which means that all Indians, by the time they are in middle school, have learned two — and quite often three — languages with scripts as different as Russian and French, and sometimes as different as Spanish and Arabic, all of them with a rich and ancient literary heritage. Simultaneously they are taught English. So by the time they leave school most Indians speak two, or sometimes three, Indian languages and English. As was also noted by Ambassador Levitte in his statement, to be Indian therefore means to be multilingual.

We understand the words used and the uses of multilingualism. But we also know that it can be used to side-step a dialogue rather than to invite it. During our colonial interregnum, when Indian maharajas were forced to accept a British Resident at their *darbars*, one of them, knowing that most Englishmen in India were monoglots and, of any foreign language, were likely to have the most distaste for French, decreed that French would be the language of his court. For many years, through this ingenious embrace of multilingualism, he made sure that he did not have to exchange a word with successive British Residents.

That clever maharaja has been born again in many avatars at the United Nations. His voice is heard whenever representatives fortunate enough to have one of the official languages as their mother tongue insist that they would stop negotiating if they were forced to speak in a foreign language. They forget that most representatives have no choice. Indians, for instance, or Japanese, Nigerians or Brazilians never get to speak in their mother tongues at the United Nations. At a recent meeting, when interpretation stopped, the South African Chairman's proposal to continue in English provoked outrage from others who accused him of partiality, arguing that they would be put at a disadvantage if they could not speak in their mother tongues. "I agree with you", said the Chairman, and started to speak in Zulu. Multilingual protests quickly faded then into tongue-tied embarrassment.

At the United Nations now, as in that distant Indian court, language is politics. Human beings, not States, speak languages, but it is the interplay of State politics that has determined which would be the official languages of the United Nations. Hindi, for instance, is spoken by over 1 billion people in India and is understood or spoken by millions more in the rest of South Asia and in the Indian diaspora. More people speak Hindi than speak French or, for example, Russian or Arabic. But Hindi is not an official language of the United Nations.

Questions are asked about that in the Indian Parliament. Although we explain that each additional official language raises the cost of conference services exponentially, we are not sure that this entirely satisfies our parliamentarians, because they see the choice of the six official languages as arbitrary at best, giving those a status denied to others which have as good a claim or better to be considered world languages.

We know that the United Nations cannot have a vast number of official languages, but what the United Nations should not do is confuse multilingualism with the promotion of only the six languages it has dubbed official. These six languages are privileged over hundreds of others. However, class distinctions have crept in among them. One has become more equal than others, and the others resent this.

To put this in terms of feudal experience, the barons are up in arms against the king, but for the plebeians, this is not their fight. It promotes no interest of theirs.

We thank France for trying to accommodate all shades of concern. However, even as amended, the draft before us proposes changes in administrative policy that cannot and should not be smuggled in through a draft resolution on multilingualism. These are issues that should be considered in the Fifth Committee, in the light not just of present practice, but, even more importantly, of the principles of the Charter.

If implemented, the proposal made in this draft would place an enormous extra burden on those who do not have an official language as their mother tongue. It would ignore the fact that an Indian staff member, for instance, was already at least trilingual, but would expect him or her to have learned a second foreign language in addition to English. But not one Indian language is an official language. We would consider this the promotion not of multilingualism but of prejudice.

Nationals of the major contributors dominate the Secretariat, because most of the posts are allocated on the basis of contributions. The two working languages of the Secretariat are European languages. Four out of the six official languages are also European languages. It is not surprising, therefore, that most developing countries feel that the Secretariat — either consciously or simply because of the way it is composed and functions — promotes a Western agenda. Multilingualism has not made it multicultural or given it a truly international personality.

What the Secretariat promotes as universal norms are usually the latest Western fads. But rarely does the Secretariat betray a consciousness that it is supposed to be an institution that gathers together all cultures, different traditions of thought and a variety of points of view. Anything that makes it even more difficult for the Secretariat to recruit from developing countries or to promote their nationals within the system will strengthen the bias that already exists.

We in India cherish multilingualism, simply because we cannot get by without it. We welcome any initiative to promote true multilingualism, but we deeply regret the fact that the draft resolution before us strays into areas of administrative policy that would warp even more the structure of the Secretariat, promote linguistic chauvinism and create problems for our nationals.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): At the outset, I should like to stress that Japan respects the status of the six official languages of the United Nations and that it is by no means our intention to challenge the principle of multilingualism as such.

However, looking at the issue in the context of this draft resolution, I have to point out, with all due respect to the French Ambassador, that the draft before us — although some amendments have been made to it since last week — is not yet acceptable to us, primarily for the following reasons.

First, there is serious concern that, should the draft resolution be adopted, paragraph 4 would have an adverse impact on nationals whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages of the United Nations, since it states that

> "the promotion of staff...should take into account adequate and confirmed knowledge of a second official language".

This is a matter of particular concern with respect to nationals of developing countries where only one of the official United Nations languages is taught at school. There can be no justification for the United Nations to discriminate against such nationals or place them at a disadvantage on the basis of their mother tongue.

Secondly, we are concerned that this draft resolution, particularly its paragraph 5, would, if I am not mistaken, result in discrimination in the recruitment of nationals who have no other mother tongue than one of the six official languages. That paragraph requests the Secretary-General, when recruiting staff, to take into account the knowledge of an official language of the United Nations in addition to their own mother tongue. Here again there is no justification for bringing any element of discrimination into the system of recruitment.

Thirdly, the draft resolution, if adopted, would still have a greater negative impact on the United Nations system than the previous resolution — 50/11 of 1995 — because it expands the scope of application to include the funds and programmes of the United Nations. Resolution 50/11 applied only to the United Nations and not to the funds and programmes.

It is also important that we study the implications of the other parts of the draft resolution more carefully before we consider expanding its application.

Given all of these problems, we must question whether this draft resolution would serve the purpose of multilingualism in its true sense. We consider, rather, that it could, despite the intention of its proponent, inadvertently work against that purpose.

I must also point out that my delegation has learned that many countries want to have more time to study this draft resolution carefully. I see no reason why we have to consider this draft, which contains so many decisive elements, at the very end of the year and with little time to debate this issue. I should like to propose, therefore, that we defer consideration of the draft resolution to next year in order to allow us to discuss it thoroughly. In this context, I appreciate the understanding of the matter expressed by the French Ambassador.

Finally, I should like to add that we agree with the proposal just made by the Indian representative to refer this matter to the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Kennedy (United States of America): As a multicultural country, the United States fully supports and appreciates multilingualism. Residents of the Borough of Queens, here in New York City, claim the greatest level of ethnic diversity of any county in the United States. Residents of Queens represent over 120 countries and speak more than 100 languages. In fact, New York City's foreign-born residents account for more than 35 per cent of its population. As Mayor Giuliani said in this Hall on 1 October, Americans are not a single ethnic group; Americans are not one race or one religion; Americans emerged from all nations.

While fully respecting the principles of multilingualism, my delegation must voice its strong concern regarding several of the provisions of the draft resolution in document A/56/L.44/Rev.1. For example, the second part of paragraph 4

> "urges the Secretariat ... to ensure, in particular when promoting staff, respect for equality of the working languages of the Secretariat ... and of their use".

How would the Secretariat ensure respect for the equality of French and English in the Secretariat and of their use? Does this language imply the application of a quota system? Would such provisions be implemented at the expense of competing staff members whose mother tongue is not French or English and override other considerations, including competency and experience?

There is no legislative provision that specifies that working languages must be used equally. The principle of the equality of the working languages — and, in fact, of all languages, be they official or non-official — is not in dispute and, hopefully, is accepted by all delegations.

The question in the second part of paragraph 4 involves the utilization of the working languages in the everyday work of the Secretariat. Use is simply based on practical considerations, including, as stated in the Secretary-General's report under this item, the language of the host country.

Paragraph 5 of the draft resolution is, at best, meaningless, since it is subject to the requirements of Article 101 (3) of the Charter. It is, at worst, discriminatory, since it implies that further conditions should be placed on the requirements found in Articles 8 and 101 of the Charter. The United States cannot support such language, since its strict application would have the effect of penalizing applicants for United Nations positions whose mother tongue is not one of the official six languages. In effect, its strict application would require such applicants to be trilingual — to speak not only their first language, but also English or French plus another official language.

Many prospective United Nations staff members who do not speak one of the official languages as their first language are from developing countries whose nationals are underrepresented in the Secretariat. This paragraph clearly detracts from the universal and multicultural character of the Organization. We urge all delegations not to support such discriminatory language. The hallmark of the United Nations should be inclusiveness, not discrimination.

Many provisions of the draft resolution before us go beyond current human resources legislation. The full implications of such personnel issues should be considered with care and deliberation in the Fifth Committee following full and constructive consultations with the sponsors.

My delegation also cannot support paragraph 7. Implementation of that paragraph would have the effect of hindering the negotiating process not only in the General Assembly and its Committees, but also in the Security Council and its sub-bodies. Implementation of provisions urging Member States to plan working meetings to allow them to be held, except under exceptional circumstances, on the basis of documents which have been translated in good time would place undue burdens on the Secretariat and Member States and have a profound negative impact on the decision-making process. As stated in the Secretary-General's report,

> "There are no provisions requiring the Secretariat to provide translations in all the official languages of preliminary texts of draft resolutions". (*A/56/656, para. 41*)

As we all know, delegations must often conduct negotiations under severe time constraints, including on questions of peace, security and humanitarian relief. Such important work should not and cannot be hindered by implementation of this paragraph.

We also note that there have been no estimates of expenditures, as required by rule 153 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure. Thus, there will be no

expenditure of any kind in implementing the provisions of this draft resolution and therefore all the activities required by this draft resolution can and will be accomplished within existing resources. If that is the case, and this work can be accomplished by the redeployment of resources, one must ask whether the paramount goals of this Organization will suffer from the redirection of effort. Also, it would have serious financial consequences by adding additional responsibilities and requirements to conference services. This is a matter that needs a statement of programme budget implications and that should be carefully and thoroughly reviewed and considered at the resumed fifty-sixth session, as the draft's introducer suggested.

I would also like to comment on paragraphs 1 and 8 through 11. By paragraph 1, the General Assembly would welcome the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. Since the report does not contain recommendations, it is not possible for us to consider such language. Since the calendar of conferences includes meetings of all organs, we would like to ask the sponsors to explain how they arrived at the conclusion in paragraph 8 concerning meetings of General Assembly Committees. What data is this conclusion based on? In any event, the trend concerning the holding of calendar meetings without interpretation is not on the rise, as illustrated in the table in the Secretary-General's report. This is a question of practicality and the prioritization of resources is decided by Member States.

Concerning paragraph 9, my delegation would like to ask the sponsors to explain the meaning of

> "publish statistical information concerning the acquisition policy of the libraries and documentation centres of the various organs, according to linguistic criteria".

Do the sponsors mean to publish statistics on the number of books and electronic resources acquired by libraries and documentation centres of the various organs in the six official languages?

Acquisition decisions cannot be based solely on linguistic criteria. One cannot divide a budget into six equal parts and make acquisition decisions accordingly. Not all books and databases are available in the six languages. Acquisition policies must be based on a number of factors, including relevance, professional reputation of the author or editor, language availability and the projected usage of the materials. This is a question that should be considered, if necessary, in the Committee on Information and the Fourth Committee.

It appears inappropriate for a draft resolution being considered directly in plenary to contain specific language calling for development of a minor research tool, as included in paragraph 10. Again, this language should be considered in the Committee on Information and the Fourth Committee. All delegations and capitals have access to the Official Document System (ODS). ODS contains the full text in the six official languages of all parliamentary documents. In the first quarter of next year, all users of ODS will be able to search for documents in the System using words in the official language of their choice. With full multilingual support, there is very little need for a multilingual glossary.

Concerning paragraph 11, it is not clear to my delegation what the sponsors mean by "any statistical information on the development of the use of languages within the Secretariat". Considering the fact that French and English are the working languages of the Secretariat, it is unclear to my delegation which languages are being referred to. Do the sponsors mean the number of participants in the language courses offered by the Secretariat, or the number of reports and working papers drafted in French or English? If the sponsors are referring to the use of the official languages of the General Assembly or the Security Council in the Secretariat, they are blurring the distinctions between the working languages of the Secretariat and the official and working languages of those and other organs.

According to the authoritative reference work, *Ethnologue: Volume 1 — Languages of the World*, the six official languages are spoken by 35 per cent of first-language speakers worldwide. Application of multilingualism in the United Nations context does not equate with universality or cultural diversity. As representatives of a culturally diverse society, my delegation cherishes multilingualism, but its application in this context must be considered in light of questions of practicality and necessity, limited resources, fairness to all delegations and other priorities, as decided by all Member States.

Mr. Douigi (Papua New Guinea): The title of this agenda item should not be "Multilingualism". The title is misleading for reasons that will become apparent in

my statement. In fact, the title should be "United Nations personnel recruitment and development".

The criteria for the employment and promotion of staff at the Secretariat and in other organs of the United Nations are specified in Article 101(3) of the Charter of the United Nations. This Article is very clear in its language. It says that the paramount consideration in the employment of staff shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. These are the primary considerations with respect to the qualifications and capacity of the individual. They are the standards, which could be classified as subjective, as they involve an analysis of the qualifications, experience, knowledge, personal aptitudes, demeanour and capacity of the individual.

Article 101 also provides that due regard is to be given to recruitment of staff from "as wide a geographical basis as possible". This appears to be the only objective criterion allowed or provided for by the Charter. A draft resolution on this subject must not attempt to amend Article 101 of the Charter to provide for an additional objective criterion of language. Amendments to the Charter must follow the procedure set out in Chapter XVIII of the Charter. That, in our view, is the correct procedure.

There is a second, and equally important, consideration. Most small developing countries are already very disadvantaged and are not properly represented in the United Nations system. The geographical criterion has not worked for us. Why, then, should we be required to accept an additional criterion or hurdle for getting, first, employment and secondly, a promotion in the United Nations system? The Charter makes it plain that criteria other than the ones stated in Article 101 should not be entertained.

The Purposes of the United Nations are specified in Article 1 of the Charter. Paragraph 3 of this Article calls for "fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion". A draft resolution that runs counter to this freedom from any distinction based on language should not be allowed. It is saying that an applicant who does not have a working knowledge of the second language of the United Nations should not bother applying for a position within the United Nations system, even though that applicant has attained the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. It is also saying that an officer of the United Nations who has not found time to learn another language because of his dedication and commitment to his professional duties and obligations has no future in the Organization because he would not be considered for promotion. This would positively promote discrimination against those who lack knowledge of the second official language of the United Nations and is contrary to their right to freedom of employment.

Thirdly, we consider a resolution on multilingualism to be a resolution dealing with the preservation and promotion of languages. My country has more than 800 languages. We are trying desperately to preserve these languages. We also note that Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights provides that the Declaration is based on the principle that

> "the rights of all language communities are equal and independent of their legal status as official, regional or minority languages. Terms such as regional or minority languages are not used in this Declaration because, though in certain cases the recognition of regional or minority languages can facilitate the exercise of certain rights, these and other modifiers are frequently used to restrict the rights of language communities."

We understand fully the effects of the colonization of a group of people on language. The resulting effect is the survival of one language as against another. The term "colonization" in its broadest meaning is the subjugation of the rights of one by another. A draft resolution on this subject should not have the effect of legislating to subjugate the rights of an individual to freedom of employment and freedom of choice of language. The United Nations stands for the preservation and promotion of these freedoms and individual rights. The General Assembly must not legislate to legitimize restrictions on these rights and freedoms.

For 99 per cent of Papua New Guineans, the English language is either the third or even the fourth language. Given our geographical location, why should we be asked to learn an additional European or other foreign language, when it has no direct relevance to everyday life or to trade and economic activities in our country, let alone the region? Given a choice of languages, we would prefer Bahasa Indonesia, spoken by our neighbour, or Japanese, spoken by one of our

largest trading partners. Given the choice of a European language, we would probably opt for German, also for trading reasons. None of these is listed as an official language of the United Nations.

We have maintained our right to freedom of choice of language. We must maintain our right to freedom of choice of employment. This freedom is specified in article 23 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In fact, the right to work is specified in article 6 (1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and article 7 (c) provides specifically that everyone should be given a reasonable opportunity to be promoted in his employment and that this opportunity should not be subject to considerations other than those of "seniority and competence". This right must not be restricted or regulated by legislation that promotes discrimination against those who are "linguistically challenged".

Fourthly, we are strongly of the view that the United Nations must be serviced by the best technical and professional expertise that the Member States have to offer. The best technical and professional person may not necessarily be capable of mastering additional new languages. That person should not, therefore, be denied an opportunity for employment and promotion in the system. We believe that in matters of personnel hiring and development, the Secretary-General must be given absolute freedom and discretion with regard to choice of personnel. We must determine policies only in respect to what we expect the Secretariat to do or carry out. We must refrain from micromanaging the Organization.

These are matters on which the Secretary-General must be required to report. If there is lacklustre performance, then we must require the Secretary-General to undertake a review to improve that performance. But we should not begin to tell him whom he should employ and whom he should not promote. An attempt to do so would be to rewrite his terms of employment. It also, in our view, implies that the sponsors question his appointments and promotions to date — thus the necessity to give him precise instructions in respect to these matters. If this is an indictment on the Secretary-General's performance, then we would like to place on record our firm view that any such conclusion is unsubstantiated by any evidence before us. In fact, no such evidence has been brought to our attention.

If the primary problem is in the Secretariat servicing the Member States, then we are not averse to looking at improving the system to provide better interpretation and other facilities for Member States within the system. However, we are not convinced that the servicing of Member States will necessarily be enhanced by requiring, through legislation, those technical and professional officers to be multilingual.

I must add that I agree with the arguments put forward by India, Japan and the United States before me.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Spanish-speaking countries that are Members of the United Nations.

I would like to begin my statement by paying tribute to the great African cultural figure and humanist, Léopold Senghor.

The Charter of the United Nations was written in six languages — Spanish being one of them — and legally deposited in the archives of the United States. International law is multilingual. Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are both the official and the working languages of the General Assembly, its committees and its subcommittees, and of the Security Council. This is not a discriminatory language regime, but a pragmatic one; it would be impossible to select all of the languages of the world. It is also a vehicle for integration, since the languages chosen as official languages were — and continue to be — those spoken by a greater number of people.

The raison d'être and the credibility of the United Nations lie in its diversity and universality. Multilingualism was integral to its conceptual foundation, and we therefore welcome the appointment of a coordinator to deal with these issues, thus according multilingualism the importance it deserves. In selecting the six official languages of the Organization, the founders were, without doubt, guided by that integrative and universal spirit. Therefore, we should consider the use of these official languages — chosen precisely because of their global scope — not as discriminatory or restrictive with regard to any Member State, but as an element of integration and universality.

In this sense, it is clear that the use of only one language would be more discriminatory than the use of six languages that are spoken throughout a large part of

world. Spanish, for example, is spoken by about 400 million people throughout the world. On the basis of population forecasts, that number will rise to 550 million by 2050.

The widespread use of a single language would mean that not only Spanish, but the other official languages, would fall into disuse. The reality is that, for example, in the Organization's public information, and particularly on its Internet site, there is an overwhelming difference between the information provided in English and in the other official languages. Only one tenth of the people of the world speak English, but at present 80 per cent of the content of the Web is in that language. The United Nations should make an effort to have a more equitable distribution of information, reflecting the diversity of the world that is represented here.

We are concerned that at the beginning of the twenty-first century there is a trend towards the use of a single language in the work the United Nations — an Organization of global reach that is trying to communicate with all peoples and civil society. Our position on this matter is clear: there can be no multilingualism if United Nations officials are monolingual. That is why, while we appreciate the steps taken by the Secretary-General to increase and encourage the learning and teaching of languages among United Nations officials, we would like to express our concern about the fact that, as the Secretary-General's report on multilingualism acknowledges, there is at present no legislative requirement for United Nations personnel to speak more than one working language, or even one other official language of the Organization.

During the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, in 1995, the United Nations expressed the desire that personnel recruited by the Organization should have a command of and use at least one of the six official languages of the Organization in addition to one working language of the Secretariat. Six years later, we believe that the time has come to take practical measures gradually to translate that desire into reality.

In conclusion, my delegation, and the countries that I have the honour to represent, believe not that the peoples must learn one single language of the United Nations or any other global institution, but, rather, that the institutions that govern and direct globalization must learn the language of the peoples.

In this respect, we believe firmly in the advisability of reaching consensus on this important matter. That is why we agree that we should postpone action on the draft resolution so that we can reach general agreement.

Ms. Chan (Singapore): Singapore is a strong supporter of the concept of multiculturalism, of which multilingualism is an important aspect. We are a multi-ethnic, multireligious and multilingual society, and our national policies reflect this. We have four official languages — English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil — of which two are also official languages of the United Nations.

Our policy of official multilingualism was originally introduced out of necessity when we achieved independence as a small and heterogeneously populated State. Over the years, we have come to appreciate this policy for its own sake as a practical demonstration of the diversity which we believe to be one of our strengths as a nation. We are therefore strongly supportive of and sympathetic to the promotion of multilingualism in the United Nations, which for us represents, in an important way, the international community's respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.

Unfortunately, my delegation has serious reservations about the draft resolution that has been introduced today. Had it been presented for action in its current form, we would regretfully have voted against it. We are of the view that the Fifth Committee would have been a more appropriate forum in which to introduce the draft resolution. Several operative paragraphs of the draft, paragraph 4 in particular, would have significant long-term human resource, budgetary and organizational implications for the United Nations system. Decisions in the Fifth Committee are normally reached by consensus precisely because that Committee deals with issues with financial implications for all Member States. This draft resolution should also be brought to the General Assembly only as a consensus text.

We are concerned that this draft, while well-meaning, would inadvertently promote discrimination among the Member States. It is obviously necessary, on practical grounds, for United Nations personnel to speak at least one of the working languages of the

United Nations. But many Member States do not have any of the six official languages as national languages. The negative implications for United Nations employees from such States are obvious. These countries already have the burden of training personnel in one foreign language. If this draft resolution were adopted, citizens of such countries would suffer an additional handicap in their careers in the United Nations unless their countries found the resources to train them in a second official language. The new provisions of this draft would also extend this handicap beyond the United Nations to the executive agencies — that is, throughout the entire United Nations system.

Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter states that

> "The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity."

While other considerations can be taken into account, any individual consideration should not be given prominence over any other.

We would like to express our great appreciation to the sponsors of the draft resolution for their constructive and helpful approach in not requesting action on the draft resolution at this time. A vote on this issue would have been unnecessarily divisive and, in the long-term, unhelpful to the entirely worthy cause that this draft resolution seeks to promote. We fully concur that this issue is best addressed through a consensus text. We look forward with pleasure to participating in further consultations to achieve that end.

Mr. Fahmy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General for his report, and to welcome the appointment of Assistant Secretary-General Miles Stoby as Coordinator for Multilingualism. We have read the Secretary-General's report and welcome his efforts to follow a comprehensive policy aimed at enhancing the language proficiency of United Nations staff by encouraging them to learn another of the six official languages and by making knowledge of additional official languages an incentive for their appointment and promotion.

When the Arabic language was introduced as an official language, in 1974, it was a landmark event that focused tremendous attention on the Arab community in all areas of the Organization's activities. Multilingualism in the United Nations requires equality among the six official languages. My delegation therefore believes that all official languages should be treated equally and that this should apply to all areas and subjects, whether with regard to United Nations documents or to interpretation services for meetings.

The establishment of the United Nations web site, in 1995, was the start of a pioneering project that embodied the desire of the United Nations to benefit from the latest scientific achievements in order to disseminate the positions and views of Member States. We continue to look forward to the day when the General Assembly will take the bold decision to achieve language equality on the web site. At a time when the Secretary-General is called upon to respond to the recommendations of the Committee on Information and submit specific proposals to achieve the goal of language equality on the web site, we wish to re-emphasize the resolutions adopted by the Committee at its latest session, calling upon the Secretary-General to ensure the fair and equal distribution of financial and human resources earmarked for the web site among the six official languages.

Finally, the delegation of Egypt believes that respect for multilingualism — one of the basic principles in the work of the United Nations — is a guarantee of fruitful cooperation among Member States. The General Assembly should therefore reiterate the principle of the equality of all official languages. In that context, we call for the endorsement of the draft resolution on multilingualism, which could lend momentum to a fruitful dialogue among civilizations.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Charter provision on the use of various languages in the Organization is a reflection of the universal nature of the Organization and a recognition by its founders and Members that without multilingualism, the United Nations cannot make it possible for the peoples and nations of the world to know its purposes and principles and to appreciate the programmes it devises to tackle the problems it aims to solve, or the plans it has for solving current and future challenges.

My delegation is delighted to note that, at this session, the Secretariat is about to draft specific strategies to deal with the shortcomings in the pattern of language use in the Organization. We also welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to realize the aim of multilingualism on the United Nations web site. It is our hope that this commitment will include the publication in all six official languages of all communications and statements issued by the United Nations, listings of the events organized by the Secretariat and summaries of the deliberations of the Security Council.

The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/56/656 contains detailed information on activities aimed at enhancing multilingualism. We wish to refer specifically to the language training programme, which teaches the six official languages, and the incentives to encourage staff to learn those languages and to excel in two or more of them. In view of the increasing numbers of staff joining the language training programme, my delegation supports dedicating more human and financial resources to it to enable it to achieve the objectives of enriching cultural and intellectual diversity, which the United Nations should safeguard.

By resolution 36/117, of 10 December 1981, the General Assembly decided that all documents should be distributed in the official languages at the same time. In subsequent resolutions — including resolution 53/208, of 18 December 1998 — the General Assembly affirmed that no document should be distributed until it is available in all official languages. Although my delegation recognizes the improvements that have been made, I must nevertheless state that the provisions on the distribution of documents in all languages is not strictly abided by, and this presents an obstacle to the participation of some delegations in the work of the General Assembly and other international forums. We hope that the programmes set up by the Coordinator for Multilingualism will address the issue of the simultaneous distribution of documents in all the official languages. My delegation would also like to stress that interpretation should be provided in all the official languages at all meetings convened by the United Nations and at meetings of regional groups, so that all delegations have an opportunity to participate effectively and efficiently in the work of the United Nations.

The principle of equal treatment of all official languages in the General Assembly, its committees, subcommittees and other bodies — a statutory principle that has proved its usefulness over time — must be affirmed by the General Assembly. My delegation is therefore pleased to be a sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.44/Rev.1. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly on measures to improve multilingualism at the United Nations, when the Assembly will consider the adoption of a draft resolution to that end.

Mr. Al-Awdi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we should like to make clear that we do not intend to pass judgement on which is the best language in the United Nations. On the contrary, we believe that tolerance and respect make it imperative to admit that all languages are important and have their own beauty, and that they are all worthy of respect. I personally feel pride and delight when I learn phrases and idioms from the languages spoken by my colleagues here at the United Nations.

My delegation would like to reaffirm that the item on multilingualism is one of the most important ones under consideration, as it touches upon the essence of the work of the United Nations in all fields. A quick look at the items recently considered by the General Assembly will make it clear that most bear some relation to the one on multilingualism, in particular those concerning the strengthening of the role of the United Nations system and of the General Assembly and those on a dialogue among civilizations, multiculturalism and respect for the cultural heritage of countries.

Language is the source of knowledge and culture for all societies and civilizations. Proof of this is the fact that one cannot begin to know the customs, traditions and beliefs of any society without first and foremost learning the language of that society, in order to be able to interact with its inhabitants and to become acquainted with its many facets.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the question of the role of the Arabic language in the United Nations. According to resolution 50/11, Arabic is one of the official languages of the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs. We would stress here the need to provide the necessary support to

strengthen the capabilities of the Arabic interpretation and translation services in the Secretariat.

This is a very important matter, as my delegation has noted with regret that, during some formal meetings of certain regional groupings, such as the non-aligned countries and the Asian Group, on occasion no Arabic interpretation was available, and sometimes there was no interpretation at all. This contravenes General Assembly resolution 50/11 and violates and disregards the legitimate rights of the Arab States that are members of those groups, depriving them of an important service and as such, the participation of Arab delegations in such meetings will be less effective.

My delegation hopes that all countries will abide by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, including the draft resolution that was supposed to be adopted today. We urge them in particular not to hold meetings in the event interpretation is not available or if documents are not available in all official languages.

My delegation has read the report of the Secretary-General on this item. We would like to express our appreciation for the efforts made by Mr. Miles Stoby, Coordinator for Multilingualism and Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, and his team in dealing with this issue, as well as for their contribution to the preparation of the report under consideration.

My delegation has noted the positive developments that have taken place in the field of language training. The Secretariat must continue to work to develop the language training programme, including in the Arabic language. My delegation notes also that considerable progress has been made in the wide use of official languages in the Department of Public Information and on the Internet. We encourage the Secretariat to ensure that the material provided on the Internet appears in all official languages.

My delegation calls on the Secretariat, and in particular on the Coordinator for Multilingualism, to follow up on the language training programme and on the use of all official languages in all United Nations bodies and those working under its supervision. Let me give as an example the United Nations International School — if this falls within the purview of the work of the Coordinator. The Arabic department there suffers from a severe lack of resources and therefore is not able properly to discharge the task of teaching Arabic to our children. In contrast, other languages enjoy the interest and support of the sponsoring States of those programmes.

We call for the provision of the necessary support for the Arabic-language programme in that school. My delegation believes that our children's right to learn their own language cannot be denied, as this constitutes the pillar of their social and cultural identity whatever that culture or civilization is.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The existence of official and working languages in the United Nations and their status reflects the universal nature of the Organization as well as the cultural diversity of the world community.

The use in the United Nations of various languages, as has been noted on several occasions by the General Assembly, enriches the Organization and thereby contributes to the achievement of the goals set out in the Charter. The States Members of the United Nations regularly reaffirm the need for equality among the working languages in the Organization. Decades of experience have shown that the United Nations has managed to achieve a very good balance between reflecting the world's linguistic diversity as fully as possible and ensuring that the Organization is able to function. This is certainly one of the factors that has contributed to the harmonious integration of new States — of which there are now many more than when the Organization was founded — into the activities of the United Nations.

The principle of equality between official and working languages must be periodically reconfirmed by the General Assembly. All Member States should receive equal treatment as regards the use and quality of all official and working languages. Unfortunately, for the time being, this goal has not been achieved fully. On the basis of the decisions adopted by the General Assembly in 1995, 1997 and 1999, the Russian delegation became one of the co-sponsors of this draft resolution on multilingualism. However, bearing in mind the significance of the draft, we, like the other co-sponsors, are interested in garnering a consensus decision on it, and we hope that this will be achieved in subsequent consultations with the delegations concerned.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): It is always with great concern and considerable

disappointment that the Gabon delegation takes the floor in the debate on multilingualism. It is indeed regrettable to note that, despite the resolutions that have been adopted on a regular basis on this issue, the use of the six official languages and of the two working languages of the Secretariat is no more than a virtual reality. Those languages often appear only in the final phase of the publication of texts, in the form of translations that, regardless of their quality, cannot, for lack of time, allow for high-quality conceptual and intellectual exchanges of views.

Every year, the reports and notes of the Secretary-General and the resolutions and decisions that are adopted lose a little more of their theoretical richness and depth. Having been drafted on the basis of a single language — or almost so — these texts cannot genuinely reflect the nuances or the varied and rich cultural identities of our multifaceted international society. This is indeed a loss to our Organization and represents a most dangerous impoverishment in terms of international cooperation.

If there is any collective right to be enjoyed in this universal house — a right of States and of the men and women working side by side here, as enshrined in international instruments and texts — it is the right to be able to think and to express oneself. Languages are both a means of expressing thought and a vehicle for that thought. They are a source of intellectual enrichment and, without doubt, an irreplaceable tool for communication.

Several statements we have heard this morning raise an issue that transcends today's discussion. That is why the Gabon delegation is of the view that — as was so wisely suggested by the representative of France — we must all work in great concertation on this issue so as to achieve not only a consensus text, but also and above all to find effective solutions to the real problems reflected in draft resolution A/56/L.44/Rev.1. It is indeed through scrupulous compliance with our language obligations that the Secretariat and the Member States will defend the intellectual wealth of this Organization.

Mr. Schumacher (Germany): Germany has supported the efforts of France to work for a resolution on multilingualism. It goes without saying that such a resolution would not require merely the broadest possible support among Member States; no, it would require a consensus. This was the basis on which Germany declared its readiness to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

Those delegations that have taken the floor to comment on the text, objecting to paragraphs relating to the recruitment and promotion of United Nations staff, have made very valid points. They represented important Member States from all regions, whose commitment to the cause of the United Nations has been proven on many occasions. Their opinions cannot be pushed aside.

Human resources management issues are highly sensitive. I commend our Indian colleague for his very thought-provoking speech and share his despair — German is not an official, either, in this house. Thus, I would like to support the very constructive approach of our French colleague to this delicate matter to continue to work towards consensus on the crucial issues "in a spirit of patient dialogue". Further action should be postponed at this point in the debate and we should take note that there is a strong interest in continuing the debate in the Fifth Committee too.

Mr. Raubenheimer (South Africa): My delegation is concerned about the issue of multilingualism, as raised in draft resolution A/56/L.44/Rev.1. This issue is particularly important to us because South Africa is a country with 11 official languages. How we decide on the use of those languages is extremely important to our country.

My delegation is pleased that the sponsors of the draft resolution before us have amended the original draft, which was difficult for us to accept. While the amended draft is a great improvement, my delegation still feels that it is not acceptable. We would have preferred that this issue be discussed more thoroughly before being brought to the General Assembly. We thus appreciate the sponsors' decision to postpone consideration of this item. We look forward to participating in thorough consultations on this very important issue.

We still feel, however, that this is an issue that should have been dealt with outside the General Assembly, perhaps in a meeting of interested Members and the Secretary-General. Otherwise, one cannot avoid the impression that the sponsors are using the power of the General Assembly to micromanage the work of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): At the outset, I wish to reaffirm my country's firm commitment to promoting multilingualism in the United Nations through the use of all six official United Nations languages in all aspects of our work.

Some paragraphs in the revised draft resolution before us in document A/56/L.44/Rev.1 aim at achieving this and we support them in principle, including those pertaining to interpretation and documentation needs. However, my delegation remains concerned with operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, which has far-reaching implications for personnel and administrative matters in the United Nations and as a result, we feel, should not be included in a resolution on multilingualism.

We also feel that some paragraphs of the draft might have programme budget implications. Hence, we feel that many of the technical matters covered in those paragraphs, as well as some others, rightly fall within the purview of the Fifth Committee and not of the plenary.

By specifically stating that adequate and confirmed knowledge of a second official language should be taken into account, in addition to other factors affecting promotion, paragraph 4 in effect suggests that knowledge of two official languages is on a par with, if not more decisive than such matters as competence, experience and knowledge of a particular subject when it comes to promotion.

By emphasizing this language requirement, paragraph 4, in our view, goes beyond Article 101 and weakens resolution 2480 B (XXIII), which has also guided the Secretary-General with respect to the promotion of Secretariat staff and personnel. Paragraph 4 also extends this language requirement to other parts of the United Nations system, including funds and programmes.

My delegation continues to believe that Secretariat staff and personnel must be promoted on the basis of merit and competence. The General Assembly should resist micromanaging the Secretariat in this respect by emphasizing particular factors to guide promotion. Furthermore, many staff members of the United Nations are of a mother tongue other than the official languages of the United Nations. Requiring them to have command of two official languages would adversely affect their chances of promotion in both relative and absolute terms. This requirement would also discriminate against, or at least place at a clear disadvantage, those who have not had the good fortune of learning a second official language of the United Nations. This would ultimately have an impact on the cultural diversity and universality of the Organization and possibly affect adversely other agreed goals to which we all subscribe, such as promoting gender balance and increasing the representation of nationals of developing countries in the Secretariat.

Achieving cultural diversity, universality and multilingualism are important goals for which we all strive. However, efforts to promote them should be fair, mutually reinforcing and complementary. One of these goals should not be promoted at the expense of the others. At the same time, although we appreciate the efforts of the sponsors to take into account concerns regarding the recruitment issue, we believe that the new operative paragraph 5 would still require two official languages for recruitment, as it requires knowledge of a second official language in addition to the mother tongue, whether or not the mother tongue is an official language.

In short, it would indeed be regrettable if the cultural diversity, not to mention the efficiency, of the Secretariat and the universality of the Organization were to be sacrificed in the name of multilingualism.

For these reasons, my delegation supports the proposal of the sponsors to defer action on this draft resolution, and we appreciate that proposal. We feel it would allow more time for the general membership to consult and negotiate on the draft resolution with a view to reaching consensus. We thus look forward to participating in the negotiations and consideration of this text at a resumed session.

Mr. Chaudhry (Pakistan): Pakistan supports the principle of multilingualism. We believe that General Assembly resolutions on this question should promote multilingualism, not discrimination on the basis of languages. The importance of this subject, therefore, warrants a consensus resolution.

It is evident from this debate that the draft resolution, as presented, does not yet enjoy consensus. It includes elements that clearly require further deliberations. References have been made to the substantive paragraphs on recruitment and promotion of the staff of the United Nations, which go far beyond the provisions of Article 101 of the Charter. That Article, as the Assembly has heard many delegations

repeat, calls for giving paramount consideration to competence, efficiency and integrity.

The draft resolution actually suggests major changes to the existing criteria for recruitment and promotion. This is tantamount to modifying the agreed aspects of human resources management of the United Nations, which has lately been the subject of extensive deliberations in the Fifth Committee. Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 need, therefore, to be referred to the Fifth Committee for in-depth discussion as part of the Committee's agenda on human resources management.

Many other paragraphs of the draft resolution also have an impact on the administrative policies of the United Nations and could even have budgetary implications. In order to take an informed decision, it would be useful to ask the Secretariat to let us know the financial implications, if any. Again, this leads us to take up the matter through the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, if needed, as required under rule 153 of the rules of procedure.

Another aspect that I have not heard mentioned in other speeches thus far is that many developing countries spend their precious resources on training their diplomats in one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Imposing the requirement of the second official language for their nationals to enter the United Nations bureaucracy would place an additional burden on them and discriminate against their representation in the Secretariat.

Finally, we agree with those delegations who stated that multilingualism should promote cooperation, not conflict. If this important but sensitive question is not viewed in correct perspective, language can become a source of conflict, as has been happening in our neighbourhoods, east and west.

We greatly appreciate the constructive spirit of the sponsors of this draft resolution to devote more time to building consensus. We welcome this approach and would gladly participate in efforts to forge a consensus on this important issue.

Mr. Lim (Republic of Korea): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the sponsors of the draft resolution under this agenda item, including France, for the spirit of compromise that allows the postponement of action on the draft resolution. We were sincerely touched by the statements of the Ambassador of France assuring us that the sponsors are very mindful of the concerns of countries whose mother tongues are not one of the six official languages.

Indeed, the agenda item before us, "Multilingualism", is of paramount significance to all Member States. We are very much convinced that such an important draft resolution should not be adopted in a hasty manner and, more importantly, should not be adopted by voting. Therefore, my delegation is more than happy to witness the deferment of action on the draft resolution.

Let me now share our views on the promotion of multilingualism. It is our understanding that multilingualism should be based on respect for cultural diversity, as well as for all the indigenous languages of various peoples. We strongly support this noble cause and fully understand the merits of multilingualism in the context of the United Nations, which is an international body with a universal character.

As mentioned in General Assembly resolution 50/11, multilingualism is to be construed as a corollary to the universality of the United Nations, which implies that it not only must be sought among the six official languages but also should be fully extended to other, non-official languages. Multilingualism could be a tool for encouraging mutual understanding and harmony among peoples and countries, and should in no way serve as a basis for pitting some groups of people against others.

However, we do not believe that the draft resolution before us, as it stands, would foster multilingualism in the genuine sense of the word. It seems to us that this draft resolution is much more about promoting the second official language in the United Nations system.

In addition, it is our firm view that the promotion of United Nations staff should be pursued in accordance with the provisions of Article 101 of the United Nations Charter, which puts emphasis on efficiency, competence and integrity, as well as the need to pay due regard to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

Having said that, we believe that the draft resolution undo consideration goes against the letter and spirit of that Charter provision. In this context, it is our view that the idea of making knowledge of a

second official language a criterion for the recruitment and promotion of United Nations staff is biased against those countries whose mother tongue is not one of the six official languages. Under the current system, those who have a command of more than one of the six official languages already enjoy the benefits of administrative and financial incentives, in terms of promotion and language allowances.

In the light of these factors, my delegation has strong reservations regarding paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, which counts knowledge of a second official language as a criterion in the promotion of United Nations staff. That paragraph goes against what it is intended to achieve, by discriminating against those whose mother tongue is not one of the six official languages.

While we appreciate the fact that the sponsors of the draft resolution, including France, have made an effort to reach consensus on the text of the draft, my delegation regrets that the text as currently drafted does not duly reflect the concerns raised by many delegations, including mine, in the process of seeking consensus. Even worse, the draft resolution goes beyond the earlier resolution 50/11 by extending the scope of its application from the Secretariat to other agencies of the United Nations system. If the draft resolution were put to the vote, therefore, we would cast a negative vote.

Let me conclude by once again expressing our appreciation to the sponsors for their thoughtful decision to defer action on the draft resolution until next year. My delegation looks forward to making a constructive contribution to the discussion on the draft resolution.

Mr. Yahaya (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the views expressed by earlier speakers regarding their concerns with regard to the thrust of the draft resolution contained in A/56/L.44/Rev.1. Let me emphasize that Malaysia is not opposed to the promotion of multilingualism at the United Nations. Malaysia supports the promotion of multilingualism — for instance, in the implementation of the rule regarding the simultaneous distribution of documents in all official languages. Indeed, my delegation believes that multilingualism will promote the culture of dialogue among civilizations, which we have all endorsed.

Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that we have come to this crossroads once again. During the fiftieth session of the General Assembly in 1995, my delegation, with regret, abstained in the voting on resolution 50/11, as it was injurious to countries whose native tongue is not one of the six official languages of the United Nations. The fact that 64 countries either voted against or abstained on resolution 50/11 demonstrates that there was serious and genuine concern on the part of the general membership with regard to the thrust of that resolution.

It is the view of my delegation that the thrust of paragraphs 4 and 5 of A/56/L.44/Rev.1, as currently drafted, goes beyond the provisions of resolution 50/11 and would further penalize countries whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages of the Organization. My delegation stresses that, in the employment of staff, the Secretary-General is requested to base his consideration on Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations.

If the draft resolution were adopted, paragraph 4 would also expand the scope of its application to the funds and programmes of the United Nations. That would constitute a substantial change. Such a change, together with those resulting from the provisions of paragraph 5, should be considered in the Fifth Committee. As a matter of principle, it is the position of my delegation that administrative matters, including recruitment and promotion, should be allocated to the technical Committee, especially given the fact that only last year the Assembly adopted resolution 55/258 without a vote. In addition, the genesis of this discussion was resolution 2480 B (XXIII), which was initiated in the Fifth Committee.

Cultural diversity is one of the characteristics of our Organization. It is most regrettable that in the context of this agenda item, the sponsors failed to take this into account. We believe that such cultural diversity is particularly pertinent and crucial this year, as we commemorate the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. We are pleased that the sponsors have agreed to defer action on the draft resolution, as contained in document A/56/L.44/Rev.1, to allow more time for discussion with a view to achieving a consensus text.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): Multilingualism is a principle that deserves to be promoted. In providing for six official languages, the United Nations had that

objective in mind. We certainly believe in that principle. In our opinion, however, paragraph 4 of the draft resolution as contained in document A/56/L.44/Rev.1 and introduced by the representative of France, seeks to undermine the principles enshrined in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the United Nations charter. By emphasizing adequate and confirmed knowledge of a second official knowledge in the recruitment and promotion of United Nations personnel, the draft resolution in its present form would discriminate against many nationals of States Members of the United Nations — including those of my own country — whose mother tongue is not among the six official languages of the United Nations.

My delegation was happy to learn that the sponsors of the draft resolution have agreed to postpone action on it, allowing more time for all of us to try to formulate a consensus text. We would welcome any opportunity to be a part of the negotiating progress so as address the genuine concerns of delegations in the interests of reaching consensus. Had this draft resolution, in its present form, been pressed for action today, my delegation would have been constrained to oppose it.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

At the request of the sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.44/Rev.1, action on the draft resolution is postponed.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that, with regard to the programme of work for this afternoon, the letter from the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya before the Assembly under agenda items 59 and 60 has been issued as document A/56/704, and is available at the document distribution counters in the Hall.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.